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Fifty-second Session

50th plenary meeting

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Official Records

President: Mr. Udovenko (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Statements on the occasion of the eighth Africa Industrialization Day

The President: Before turning to the items on the agenda for this morning, I should like to remind the General Assembly that today is the eighth Africa Industrialization Day.

Since its proclamation by the General Assembly eight years ago, Africa Industrialization Day has been celebrated on 20 November. Today, it gives me great pleasure to join in the commemoration of this event.

What are we celebrating on Africa Industrialization Day? First, we are celebrating the valiant efforts of the peoples of Africa to achieve a better life for themselves through industrial development. Secondly, the celebration of this event serves as an important reminder of the need to draw world attention to the industrial development of Africa. Thirdly, Africa Industrialization Day symbolizes the solidarity of the international community with the countries in Africa. Above all, it reaffirms the principle of partnership and shared responsibility between Africa and the international community in the industrial development of the continent.

For many years, the United Nations has actively supported African countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth and development. The New Agenda for the Development of

Africa in the 1990s, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the Industrial Development Decade for Africa and the newly launched Alliance for Africa's Industrialization are some of the major programmes and initiatives that come to mind. Collectively, they underscore the commitment of the international community to Africa's development. An integral part of this commitment is the promotion and acceleration of Africa's industrial development. Based on the experience of the rich industrialized and the newly industrializing countries, there is increased recognition that industrialization holds the key to the transformation of Africa from poverty to prosperity.

The continuing decline of the industrial sector despite growing signs of economic recovery in many African countries has therefore been a cause for serious concern. As a consequence of the poor performance of the industrial sector, the share of sub-Saharan Africa in global manufacturing production has dropped from 0.6 per cent in 1970 to 0.3 per cent in 1995. The share of manufactured products in total African exports has barely changed over the last two decades and is still below 10 per cent. Moreover, four-fifths of sub-Saharan Africa's industrial production is classified as low-technology.

This disturbing trend has contributed to the widening industrialization and technological gap between Africa and the rest of the world. It has raised considerable concern about the ability of African industry to compete in a highly competitive global economic environment. Africa's leaders recognized the need to take collective



and effective action to address this crucial challenge. In June of this year, the Assembly of African Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity decided in their Harare Declaration on African Industrialization to redouble their efforts to promote sustainable industrial development through private-sector-led strategies and new global partnerships. They endorsed the launching of the Alliance for Africa's Industrialization, supported by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), as the principal mechanism for promoting private-public sector partnerships within Africa as well as partnerships between African and non-African enterprises.

Given the prominence of the private sector in Africa's industrialization strategy, it is appropriate that the theme of this year's celebration of Africa Industrialization Day is "Development of Small and Medium Industries". The majority of industrial enterprises in Africa are small and medium-sized, but they account for a large share of jobs created in the economy.

Many are individual or family-owned business operations with great potential for adjusting rapidly to changing market conditions. With trade liberalization and deregulation, their role has increased in importance. They are increasingly becoming a dynamic force for the promotion of sustainable industrial development in Africa.

While the United Nations system has done much to support the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development, much more needs to be done. Organizations of the United Nations system need to work more closely together to encourage the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in African countries. They need to intensify their efforts to help small African entrepreneurs gain access to markets, investments, credit, technology and training. In this connection, the contribution that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization has made over the years in facilitating enterprise-level cooperation between African and non-African business partners and in providing a range of technical support services to small enterprises, particularly those of women entrepreneurs, has been commendable.

The development activities of United Nations agencies in support of industrial development in Africa should be better harmonized. Resources available throughout the United Nations system for this purpose should be pooled to maximize the impact of the system's contributions to Africa's development. An important step in this direction is the incorporation of the industrial development objectives

of African countries in the formulation of country strategy notes and in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

As we celebrate Africa Industrialization Day, we remind ourselves of the importance of taking a common approach to our common challenges. The development of Africa is our common challenge, requiring concerted and coordinated action on the part of the international community. Today's event provides a good opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to international cooperation and our steadfast support to Africa as it strives to fulfil its hopes and aspirations for a better future.

I call now on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: We gather on Africa Industrialization Day to raise public awareness and harness international support — political, technical and financial — for Africa's industrial development. Industrial development is a key element of sustainable economic growth. It helps countries achieve important social objectives, such as jobs and equity. It creates opportunities for the integration of women. In rural areas, linked with agricultural development, it can help stem migration and relieve pressure on cities.

With industrial development, the continent can take decisive steps towards full-throttle competition in the globalized marketplace. But without it, as African leaders themselves declared last June in Harare, African economies will be condemned to persistent crisis, dependence on humanitarian relief and deepening poverty, despair and political unrest.

(spoke in French)

As we mark this eighth Africa Industrialization Day, hope is the watchword for much of the African continent. In 1996, for the first time in 20 years, Africa experienced growth exceeding 4 per cent. More and more countries are experiencing remarkable economic expansion. The private sector is beginning to play its role in powering the economy. Everywhere, civil society is creating the institutions it needs in order to be heard. Decision-makers are vigorously pursuing their programmes of political, economic and social reform. Good governance and its foundations — political legitimacy, a State based on the rule of law, and transparency in administration — are now the goals.

Notwithstanding what has been achieved, the results of African industry remain too meagre. Inadequate infrastructure; weak institutions; poorly adapted regulations and systems for stimulating the financial sphere; and the widening technological gap between developed and developing countries: these are obstacles that slow the industrialization of Africa. The continent therefore does not benefit as much as it could from the globalization and liberalization of trade, and it remains difficult for African countries to become fully integrated into the world economy.

(spoke in English)

This year's Africa Industrialization Day focuses on the development of small- and medium-scale industries. Such enterprises are the backbone of economic activity in Africa. They are a major source of livelihoods and income. In both the formal and the informal sectors, small entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in alleviating poverty and promoting economic progress. Increasingly at ease with new technologies and niche marketing, they can respond quickly to changes and new opportunities.

But small-scale industries need support from Governments and the international community. They require a favourable policy environment. They need to upgrade the skills of their workers, to improve the quality of their products, to find sources of financing and to gain market access. They need technology and the requisite physical infrastructure. They need partners: partners from within and beyond the region.

In this light, I welcome recent initiatives by Africa's development partners to promote trade and investment with African countries. The outcome of last month's high-level meeting on the least-developed countries, sponsored by the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the International Trade Centre, is very encouraging. With 33 out of 48 least-developed countries, Africa stands to benefit greatly from the integrated framework adopted in Geneva, especially the market access facilities that have been announced.

The Alliance for Africa's Industrialization, launched last year, is another important undertaking, in particular with respect to its focus on partnerships with the private sector.

The United Nations system — through the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic

Commission for Africa and other bodies — will continue to support such ventures. UNIDO, as the only specialized agency dealing with industrial development issues, is already promoting technical assistance to small- and medium-scale enterprises. As members know, I am committed to a strong UNIDO.

The work ahead will not be easy. There is donor fatigue towards Africa, and aid is declining. As we move forward, Africa's leaders must rise to the occasion. Their commitment — not only to getting the economic fundamentals right but to creating the broader conditions that will encourage investment and development — is of vital importance. Only then will African industry take off. Only then will Africa find the path to sustained prosperity.

For my part, I renew my pledge that the industrialization of Africa will remain one of the top priorities of the United Nations, and that I will continue to be a strong champion of African industrial development.

Statement on the occasion of Universal Children's Day

The President: I would like to remind members that in 1954 the United Nations General Assembly, at its ninth session, recommended in resolution 836 (IX) that all countries institute a Universal Children's Day, to be observed as a day of worldwide fraternity and understanding between children and of activity devoted to promoting the welfare of the world's children. The date of 20 November marks the anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly in 1959 of the Declaration on the Rights of the Child and the adoption in 1989 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The prominent English writer Charles Dickens said,

"In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice". [*Great Expectations*]

We should do our utmost to protect the young generation all over the world.

Let us remember the words of another English writer, John Ruskin:

"Give a little love to a child, and you get a great deal back". [*The Crown of Wild Olives*]

I thank the Assembly for its attention, and I remind the Assembly that today, besides marking the occasion of Africa Industrialization Day, we also celebrate Universal Children's Day.

Agenda item 17

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(j) Appointment of a member of the Joint Inspection Unit

Note by the Secretary-General (A/52/110)

The President: In connection with sub-item (j) of agenda item 17, a note by the Secretary-General has been circulated in document A/52/110.

As indicated in that document, the General Assembly is required, during the fifty-second session, to appoint a member to fill the vacancy in the Joint Inspection Unit that will arise from the expiration of the term of office on 31 December 1998 of Mr. Raul Quijano of Argentina.

As also indicated in that document, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the President of the General Assembly shall consult with Member States to draw up a list of countries — in this case, one country — which would be requested to propose a candidate for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

After holding the necessary consultations, I should like to communicate to the Assembly the following information received from the Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States: two countries — namely, Argentina and Colombia — have decided to present their candidatures for one vacancy from among the Latin American and Caribbean States.

I should like, in accordance with past practice, to consult with Member States through the procedure of holding an advisory vote by secret ballot to select from among the Latin American and Caribbean States one country, which would be requested to propose a candidate for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

Although this advisory vote would not be an election, we would follow the rules of procedure of the Assembly governing elections.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with existing practice, the country receiving the greatest number of votes, and not less than a majority of the votes of those present and voting, shall be the country selected.

May I also take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 93 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, when only one person or member is to be elected and no candidate obtains in the first ballot the majority required, a second ballot shall be taken, which shall be restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes. If in the second ballot the votes are equally divided, and a majority is required, the President shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots.

I take it that the Assembly also agrees to that procedure.

It was so decided.

The President: Before I request the Secretariat to distribute the ballot papers, I should like to remind members of the Assembly that we are now going to proceed to the selection of one country from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, which will be requested to propose a candidate to fill the vacancy in the Joint Inspection Unit. The Assembly is not — I repeat, not — appointing a member to the Joint Inspection Unit at this time. It is only selecting one country which will be requested to propose a candidate. Therefore, only the name of a country and not the name of an individual should appear on the ballot paper.

I should like to repeat the names of the two countries from among the Latin American and Caribbean States that decided to present their candidatures: Argentina and Colombia.

The ballot papers will now be distributed.

May I request representatives to use only those ballot papers.

May I further request members of the Assembly to write on the ballot paper the name of one State from among the Latin American and Caribbean States for which they wish to vote. A ballot paper containing more than one name from among the Latin American and Caribbean States will be declared invalid. Any ballots with the name of a State outside the relevant region or with the name of an individual shall not be counted at all.

At the invitation of the President, Miss Kalnina (Latvia), Ms. Han (Singapore) and Mr. Muchanga (Zambia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	167
Number of invalid ballots:	3
Number of valid ballots:	164
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	163
Required simple majority:	82
Number of votes obtained:	
Colombia	86
Argentina	77

The President: I thank members for their advice and assistance. I thank the tellers for their assistance.

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, Colombia will be requested to submit the name of a candidate and a curriculum vitae highlighting the candidate's relevant qualifications for the task ahead.

After holding the appropriate consultations described in article 3, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, including consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, I will propose a qualified candidate to the Assembly for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (j) of agenda item 17.

Agenda item 156 (continued)

Towards a culture of peace

Note by the Secretary-General (A/52/292)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.4/Rev.1)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1.

Mr. Jele (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): It is a pleasure and an honour for Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1, on behalf of my delegation and all the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, as well as the new sponsors of this draft resolution: the Central African Republic, Chile, Jamaica, South Africa and Swaziland.

In this draft resolution, we propose some elements regarding a culture of peace. The basic thrust of the draft resolution is to have at the next session a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace, and we are requesting the Secretary-General to submit one.

This draft is the outcome of intensive consultations with all interested delegations. In order to accommodate the concerns of other delegations, we have made amendments to the original draft contained in A/52/L.4, and those have been incorporated into this new text.

I will briefly mention those changes, but before that let me say that we, the sponsors, very strongly believe that the subject of a culture of peace is an important one that covers a broad area and deserves our attention at the highest level. With that in mind, we requested that this item be considered in plenary under a new and separate agenda item, and we hope that this will continue to be the case in coming sessions of the General Assembly as well.

This subject has attained a level of attention, importance and comprehensiveness that it is appropriate that it be dealt with by the apex body of the United Nations system, the General Assembly. We believe that it is the desire of the sponsors, and of all other delegations, that this be done similarly in the coming years.

In this revised text, we have added, in operative paragraph 2, the full text of a paragraph from last year's resolution on a culture of peace. In operative paragraph 3, subparagraph (c) has been added, regarding a presentation of the progress of projects within the framework of the project entitled "Towards a culture of peace".

Finally, in operative paragraph 4, we have requested that any comments made on a culture of peace or relevant issues at the just concluded session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) be included in the report submitted next year.

With these words, we would like to request that the draft resolution contained in A/52/L.4/Rev.1 be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1.

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Jin Yongjian (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I should like to inform members that should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1, the Secretary-General does not anticipate that any programme budget implications would arise.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1, entitled "Culture of peace".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 52/13).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of position. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Kirsch (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Estonia, Poland and Norway also align themselves with this explanation of vote.

The member States of the European Union attach great importance to the concept of a culture of peace. The European Union participates actively in the transdisciplinary project on a culture of peace in the framework of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). I would like to reaffirm here the European Union's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights.

In recent weeks the member States of the European Union have carefully considered the language of the draft resolution, the revised version of which is before us. In a constructive and positive spirit, the European Union proposed a number of changes to the principal sponsors of this draft resolution. We thank the sponsors for having held informal consultations at our request, but we regret that an agreement on our most important proposals did not prove possible.

We would have preferred that the further consideration of the elements of the draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace contained in the report of the Director-General of UNESCO, submitted to the General Assembly in document A/52/292, take place within the framework of UNESCO. We will convey to the Director-General our ideas regarding his draft declaration and programme of action.

The European Union has nevertheless decided to join the consensus on draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1.

Ms. Saiga (Japan): The promotion of a culture of peace is an important task for the Member States of the United Nations if our common quest for peaceful coexistence is to succeed. It is only in a culture of peace which is rooted in social interaction and sharing, tolerance and respect for human rights, and a determination to lay and then maintain the foundation of democracy and freedom that it is possible to actualize the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and thus save future generations from living in terror and fear of violence. It is for this reason that my delegation joined in the consensus on draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1.

When the General Assembly requests a report to be submitted, it expects that that report will genuinely reflect the views of the Secretary-General or of the organization to which the Secretary-General has assigned the task of preparing it. Much to our disappointment, this is not the case with the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in document A/52/292. That report, which

contains important elements such as a proposal to establish a special fund, was submitted to the Secretary-General without any prior consultation with the Executive Board of UNESCO. That failure to follow proper procedure was brought to the attention of the members of the Executive Board at its meeting last October.

My delegation would have liked a genuine discussion to have taken place within UNESCO before the report was submitted to the General Assembly so that it could benefit from the views of member States and, consequently, be received as a credible basis for future discussion. As this is not the case, my delegation is of the view that it is premature to proceed, in accordance with this year's resolution, to request the Secretary-General to submit a consolidated report containing a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace.

My delegation is concerned that the draft declaration and programme of action will be prepared without any substantive discussion and on the basis of a report that does not properly reflect the views of the States members of UNESCO. Japan therefore expresses strong reservations with regard to paragraph 4 of the resolution, and it hopes that when the Secretary-General implements this year's resolution, in cooperation with the Director-General of UNESCO, the views of the States members of UNESCO will be properly reflected.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 156?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 28

Universal Congress on the Panama Canal

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/435 and Corr.1)

Mr. Boyd (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The President of the Republic of Panama, Mr. Ernesto Pérez Balladares, invited the entities using the Canal, private-sector shipping concerns and the Governments interested in the use of the Canal to contribute ideas regarding the future of the Panama Canal at a gathering called the Universal Congress on the Panama Canal, which was held at Panama City from 7 to 10 September 1997.

President Pérez Balladares said

"The purpose of the gathering was to gain a clear vision of what the waterway would be like following its transfer to Panama. The Canal users, accordingly, had an opportunity at that forum to provide input and to discuss what kind of waterway would best serve their interests in the coming decades. There can be no doubt that the transfer of the Panama Canal will stimulate a surge of entrepreneurial activity that will create new opportunities with the development of industrial zones, the tourist industry and the opening up of the real estate market along the Canal, in what used to be known as the Canal Zone."

In 1914 the gates to the Panama Canal were opened wide to the world. The Canal is 80 kilometres long, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, and was dug through the narrowest and lowest stretch of the mountainous isthmus that links North and South America. Its principal features are its two terminal ports, its three sets of twin locks, Gatún Lake and the Gaillard Cut, also known as the Culebra Cut.

The locks enable transiting vessels to go up and come down again. The Panama Canal is a fresh-water canal. In the Gatún Locks, vessels bound for the Pacific are lifted to the level of Gatún Lake, a height of 85 feet, while Atlantic-bound vessels are lowered to sea level. In Gamboa, the Panama Canal's route leaves the natural course of the Chagres River and enters the Gaillard Cut. The Gaillard Cut is man-made. It was excavated, dredged and blasted through the mountain range known as the Continental Cordillera. In its day, the digging of the Cut was the largest earth-moving project ever attempted. Its extension reached 9 miles at its highest point, more than 320 feet above sea level. There are three levels of contiguous locks at Gatún. Ships able to traverse the Panama Canal locks can be up to 100 feet wide and 950 feet long. The locks are composed of pairs of imposing gates from 47 to 82 feet in height.

The Miraflores Locks mark the Pacific terminus of the Panama Canal. The two twin chambers of Miraflores Lake lead to the port of Balboa at sea level. Miraflores Lake, at an altitude of 54 feet, was created by damming the waters of the Rio Grande and Rio Cocoli.

Again, the Canal is a fresh-water canal. Every transit of any vessel through the Panama Canal creates a loss of 52 million gallons of water, which flow into the

oceans. Fortunately, more than 95 per cent of the merchant vessels now in service are in line with the Canal's parameters.

Panama's merchant marine ranks first in the world, and we are now planning a national maritime commission to bring together under a single body all the elements required by the new measures.

At this important Congress, the participants included representatives of chambers of commerce, export-import associations, port administrators, shipping agents, banks, insurance companies and all kinds of governmental agencies that deal with the transport aspects of foreign trade activities, as well as academic bodies. There were 65 speakers, while 345 representatives of the information media from 19 countries, as well as some 571 staff from the local media, covered the event.

Panama is very appreciative of the support given by Ambassador Edgar Camacho Omiste of Bolivia and Ambassador Pierre Lelong of Haiti to the initial idea of holding a Universal Congress on the Panama Canal. On 7 November 1995 and 24 October 1996, respectively, they spoke in favour of this idea on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. Similarly, here at the United Nations, we wish to acknowledge the support provided by Ambassador Victor Marrero of the United States, Mr. Jean-Michel Gaussois of France, Ambassador Fernando Enrique Petrella of Argentina and Mr. Emilio Izquierdo of Ecuador.

Both the European Union and the Government of Taiwan made substantial contributions to this meeting, taking into account the importance of the Canal for many countries, in particular those of South and Central America.

For the historical record, document A/52/347 contains the Declarations of the Eleventh Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Rio Group, which was held in Asunción, Paraguay, on 23 and 24 August 1997. Paragraph 25 of that document states,

"We reaffirm the importance of the Universal Congress on the Panama Canal, to be held from 7 to 10 September 1997 as a forum open to the entire international community; this meeting should serve as a consultation mechanism for specifically examining the role which the Canal should play in the twenty-first century and the plans for expanding its services which the Government of Panama is promoting

through the Board of Directors of the Panama Canal Authority. We also express our belief that the results of the Congress will contribute to the growth of world trade and to economic growth within the region and will promote international cooperation on the basis of the principle that the Inter-oceanic Panama Canal will be open, on an equal and strictly neutral basis, to all the world's users and economies."

At the Congress, Mr. Rodney Slater, Secretary of Transportation of the United States said:

"This is a time of great joy for our region. [We have] an invaluable opportunity to build a community of nations. As President Clinton put it, 'We are partners, shoulder to shoulder at this moment in history'. The Panama Canal is a global asset. It is a vital transport artery recognized by all sailors as the best way in the world to save time."

Mr. Thomas F. McLarty, Adviser to the President of the United States and Special Envoy for the Americas, added,

"In this changing world, which is also changing the lives of men and women of the hemisphere, millions of people are for the first time enjoying opportunities for growth under democratic Governments, with free markets and growing respect for human rights and for law. As an open route for commerce between the Americas, the Panama Canal will expand relations, serving as our crossroads. And it will continue to be a key to the successful economic growth of our peoples."

In the course of the meeting, Mr. Jorge E. Ritter, Minister for Canal Affairs, explained the transfer of jurisdiction over the management of the Canal. The laws and regulations of the United States that govern the Canal until 31 December 1999 will be replaced by Panamanian laws and regulations that have formed part of our country's Political Constitution since 1994. Those laws and regulations guarantee the type of agency that will be taking over from the United States. It will include an autonomous administrative and financial commission, and conditions for Canal workers will not be affected. The budget for this agency will be separate from the national budget, and the agency will guarantee that traffic in the Canal will not be interrupted for any reason.

Mr. Ritter also explained that the Treaty concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal envisages that tolls and tariffs for passage will be fair, reasonable, equitable and in line with the principles of international law. This ensures that there will never be exorbitant increases in tolls by Panama. All this was also reaffirmed by our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ricardo Alberto Arias.

The Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, Mr. César Gaviria, talking about the transition and the domestic growth produced by the use of the Canal, said that some impressive figures were being achieved. He announced that trade between Latin America and the Caribbean had grown by 20 per cent and that trade between Latin America and the United States had grown by 12 per cent. He added that the volume of trade by Latin America was increasing by 12 per cent per year.

The Congress bore ample witness to the fact that the seafaring world recognizes the stability of the Panama Canal and that international maritime organizations are confident they can depend on the security of the Canal.

Mr. Alberto Alemán Zubieta, Administrator of the Panama Canal Commission, stressed the Canal's neutrality as one of its fundamental aspects, along with other aspects such as its competitiveness, the need to pursue an appropriate financial policy and the modernization of the Canal's locks using new technology and equipment. As to the possibility of building a third set of locks in 2010, the Administrator said that

"for a decision of this magnitude we will have to carry out an appropriate engineering study".

In years past a tripartite commission, made up of Japan, the United States and Panama, had already undertaken studies with Panama regarding possible alternatives for the future of the Canal.

The gathering held in Panama studied major issues, such as the importance of the Canal; the Canal's capacity for meeting future requirements; alternative approaches to resolving problems of size and capability; the project for the third set of locks; the Canal's competitiveness; alternative routes for the Canal; the need to keep the tolls and service charges as low as possible; the effects of toll increases on future Canal usage; privatizing operations as a way of reducing costs and increasing efficiency; operating the Canal in accordance with sound business principles; avoiding domestic political interference in order

to maintain the stability of the staff; toll policies consistent with the aim of making the Canal a magnet for the development of the maritime sector and other branches of the Panamanian economy; the need to carry out studies to yield recommendations on fair toll levels; other options for the Canal; conservation of the Canal basin; prospects for the future; the importance of a consultative committee of users to act as an advisory board of the Panama Canal Authority; changes in the regulations related to conservation measures and systems; transit costs for cruise ships; and the need always to consider the rights of the users.

There was consensus among the participants that Panama does have the human and technical capital to manage, operate and efficiently maintain the Canal after it reverts to the country in 1999. According to official statistics, 82 per cent of the 8,500 workers on the waterway are Panamanians. Of 324 management positions, 148 are held by Panamanians in the operational units and the naval, engineering and construction front offices.

The Congress provided a superb and unique opportunity for representatives of the merchant marine industry and collateral fields to describe to future interested parties how the Panama Canal works and thus give them a complete understanding of what lies ahead for the Canal. The Government of the Republic of Panama is in earnest in declaring its desire to remain a key player in the world maritime industry beyond the year 2000.

In Panama's view, the Congress came to a close having attained its chief objective of demonstrating to the international community that the Republic of Panama is prepared to assume control of the Panama Canal, as stipulated in the treaties signed between the United States of America and Panama on 7 September 1977. These were coined the Torrijos-Carter treaties by my illustrious predecessor, Mr. Jorge E. Illueca, and by Mr. Fernando Manfredo, High Commissioner of the Republic of Panama to the Universal Congress on the Panama Canal, who worked long and hard to bring the task to a happy culmination.

Panamanian leaders have always believed that the Panama Canal is destined to provide an international, neutral and non-discriminatory public service and that, accordingly, its uninterrupted and efficient operation is of special interest to such organizations as the United

Nations. That is the main reason behind our introduction of this brief report.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 28?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 32

Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/462)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.24/Rev.1)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.24/Rev.1.

Mr. Bergh (South Africa): It is indeed an honour for South Africa to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic", contained in document A/52/L.24, on behalf of States members of the zone. The draft is the result of intensive consultations held with States Members of the United Nations.

The objectives of the zone include the enhancement of peace and security; the promotion of regional cooperation for social and economic development; the promotion of environmental conservation; and the sustained management of natural resources, and are being actively pursued by every member State.

Apart from peace, security and the mutual protection of the environment, each member State has definitive further benefits to be derived from its association with the region. These include the promotion of intraregional tourism, communication, technology and information exchange, and of shipping and other transport links.

I wish to cite one positive example in this respect. A resolution on the zone of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic — submitted by South Africa as Chair of the zone and cosponsored by all zone States with Permanent Missions in Vienna — was adopted at the fortieth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which was held in March 1997 in Vienna. The resolution calls for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to examine forms of assistance which could be extended to the States

members of the zone and for the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to report on progress to the Commission at its forty-second session in 1998. The resolution was sponsored by Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Nigeria, Angola and Namibia and received the endorsement of the African Group.

One of the zone's principle objectives is to promote and encourage democratic principles, good governance and the rule of law and to defend all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The region has made several contributions towards peace and security within its broader area and it fully realizes that the preservation of peace and security in the region will forever remain one of the member States' most important joint responsibilities.

For example, the members of the zone have been involved, both in a bilateral as well as a multilateral context, in attempts to achieve a positive outcome to the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. On a regular basis, the zone has reaffirmed its willingness to contribute towards achieving lasting peace in Angola. Circumstances in Sierra Leone and Liberia have also demanded the attention of zone member States, and the situation in each of them has been under constant scrutiny.

The zone has readily accepted the challenges posed by the new global agenda. The region's constant focus on democracy, good governance, peace, security and nuclear disarmament; its undertaking to take responsibility for the proper and responsible management of the environment; the protection of fish and other marine resources; cultural and technology exchanges; and economic cooperation and respect for human rights all stand to prove that the zone is successfully dealing with a changing global environment.

Another challenge for the countries of the zone lies in the multilateral arena. This is to develop more coherent strategies to engage issues of mutual importance through a process of dialogue. The zone offers a unique possibility to create such instruments for dialogue and exchange of expertise, both on a bilateral and on a multilateral level.

The South African Mission wishes to express its gratitude to States members of the various regional groups for their suggestions in drafting this draft resolution, which in its amended form should once again

provide us with the necessary consensus text. We therefore urge all Member States to support the draft resolution, so that it may be adopted without a vote.

Ms. Ramírez (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is with satisfaction that I am speaking today on agenda item 32, entitled "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic", to support an initiative which opens up interesting prospects for us in the area of international cooperation.

I would likewise like to express the appreciation of the Government of Argentina to South Africa for its important contributions to and quite outstanding coordination of the work of the zone during 1996 and 1997.

Eleven years have already gone by since the General Assembly adopted resolution 41/11 in 1986, in which it solemnly declared the region of the Atlantic Ocean, in the region between Africa and South America, the "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic". The zone was born as an area for promoting understanding and improving cooperation among the countries of the South Atlantic.

As stated in the Brasilia and Somerset West Declarations, my country attaches particular significance to fundamental concepts such as democracy and political pluralism and respect for and defence of human rights and individual freedoms. We believe that these concepts are basic elements which form the basis of the purposes and principles of this initiative.

My delegation is pleased to note that we have made steady progress towards the objectives which brought about the creation of the zone. Its member States have already held four high-level meetings, during which they examined the various fields open to cooperation during this initial stage and adopted decisions and declarations with a vision of the future.

The member States have set themselves clear objectives in fundamental areas: the strengthening of peace and security; the promotion of regional cooperation in the area of economic and social development; the protection of the marine environment; and the conservation of resources.

With regard to the first of these objectives, Argentina believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute significantly to international peace and security by continuing to restrict the areas where the use or threat of

use of such weapons takes place. The countries that belong to the zone believe in the need for all the zones which have been declared free of nuclear weapons to be consolidated.

Likewise, the Republic of Argentina firmly believes in the need to preserve the marine environment, as well as its living resources, and is pleased that this view is becoming increasingly widespread throughout the international community in general and in the countries of the South Atlantic zone in particular.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning the importance of the standards adopted in the context of the International Maritime Organization, which seek to preserve the marine environment from the spills and wastes associated with shipping, and the 1995 Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

Another issue which my delegation wishes to draw to the General Assembly's attention has to do with the transport of irradiated nuclear fuel, plutonium and high-level radioactive wastes. In this regard, I would like to place on record the concern felt by the Republic of Argentina — which is surely shared by the other countries of the zone — at the risks inherent in the passage of ships carrying radioactive wastes through the South Atlantic.

Likewise, we favour the adoption in the waters subject to our jurisdiction of measures recognized by international law aimed at safeguarding the health of our populations and marine systems. We believe in the need to strengthen international regulation in this area.

With regard to the fight against drug trafficking and the crimes associated with it, we reiterate our constant readiness to cooperate in achieving the goals of the South Atlantic zone, in line with the Somerset West Declaration. As hosts of the fifth high-level meeting, to be held next year, we trust that we will be able to make progress in the consideration of some of the issues related to cooperation on drugs that will have concrete effects in the context of the zone.

I would like once again to reaffirm that the Republic of Argentina shares in the call made annually to all States by the members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic to cooperate in promoting its objectives and to refrain from any action inconsistent with those objectives, particularly action which may

create or aggravate situations of tension and potential conflict in the region. The Republic of Argentina extends that call so that — in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Organization — all States not only prevent conflicts but also commit themselves to the peaceful quest, through negotiation, for the lasting and just settlement of disputes pending in the region.

The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic is an arena where its members have found the opportunity to express their solidarity and determination to cooperate on the basis of essential universal principles, such as the promotion of democracy and political pluralism and the advancement of human rights and fundamental liberties, in the conviction that this will bring us closer to the ideals which bind the international community. In this setting, we likewise trust that economic and commercial ties across our common ocean will be significantly expanded in these favourable circumstances.

Finally, I would like to reiterate our satisfaction and commitment as we prepare to serve as host to the fifth high-level meeting of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic in 1998, an event which we hope will lead to the advancement of the principles and objectives which prompted us to establish the zone.

Mr. Amehou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): In establishing the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic by resolution 41/11 of 27 October 1986, the General Assembly had among its objectives the promotion of peace and security in the zone and the strengthening of development cooperation between the countries of Africa and South America.

The member countries of the zone have worked towards the progressive achievement of these objectives for more than 10 years through their successive meetings in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1986, in Abuja (Nigeria) in 1990, in Brasilia (Brazil) in 1994 and in Somerset West (South Africa) last year. The course thus charted demonstrates the determination of the countries of the zone to make it a genuine instrument for the promotion of peace and a dynamic institution of South-South cooperation.

Benin therefore welcomes the progress achieved, especially the objectives attained since the holding of the fourth meeting of member States of the zone in Somerset West in April 1996.

In this connection, the positive developments in the situation in Liberia are a source of satisfaction for the delegation of Benin. Indeed, thanks to the determined action undertaken by the countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with the support of the international community, the very long and devastating war in Liberia — a country which is a member of the zone — came to an end with the holding of presidential and legislative elections on 19 July 1997.

Our hope is that, with the support of the countries of the zone and the United Nations, the current efforts to restore peace — particularly in Sierra Leone — will succeed as soon as possible.

In this connection, Benin commends the full support that the Security Council has given to ECOWAS to resolve the crisis in Sierra Leone and restore the democratically elected Government. The Government of Benin invites all parties concerned to work towards the effective and speedy implementation of the peace plan agreed to at Conakry on 23 October 1997.

The maintenance of peace and stability in the South Atlantic calls for the promotion of disarmament and the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime for small arms and weapons of mass destruction throughout the zone. To this end, the denuclearization of the South Atlantic must remain a priority objective for the countries of the zone. In that connection, we must work together to strengthen measures for a complete ban on nuclear weapons in the South Atlantic through the implementation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which has made Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Today, on the threshold of the third millennium and faced with the numerous challenges arising out of the phenomenon of globalization at the national and international levels, Benin considers that the time has come for the countries of the zone to strengthen their efforts so as to reap greater benefit from the many economic and commercial opportunities offered by the zone. We must also strengthen our cooperation in environmental protection and in activities aimed at combating drug trafficking throughout the region.

The fifth meeting of States members of the zone, to be held in 1998 and which Argentina has offered to host, must be the forum for determining ways and means of achieving those objectives. My country will spare no

effort in contributing to the implementation of such initiatives.

Mr. Ayewah (Nigeria): In contributing to the debate on the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, the Nigerian delegation wishes to express its appreciation to States Members of the United Nations and to the international community at large for their continued support of the zone as a forum designed to further cooperation among countries of the South in their pursuit of peace and development.

In confronting the issues of peace and security, member States of the zone have equally brought to the fore problems associated with crisis management and conflict resolution. It is in this connection that one must advert to the difficult situations in a number of countries members of the zone. Some of these difficult situations have found solutions, while others have proved intractable. Liberia is an example of those crisis situations that have found a solution — albeit after a protracted effort. Today, Liberia can be described as a success story. But on the other side of the coin is the continuing crisis in Angola. Regrettably, Sierra Leone and the Congo have joined the list of intractable circumstances that need the collaborative efforts of the international community in order to find durable solutions to the problems besetting the two countries.

The member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) took the bull by the horns and, with the support of the international community, succeeded in solving the Liberian problem. We look forward to similar cooperation in relation to the solution of the problem in Sierra Leone in order to reinstate President Kabbah and restore constitutional order to that country. In this regard we commend the initiative of ECOWAS and the action of the Security Council for the embargo which the latter imposed in its resolution 1132 (1997) of 8 October 1997 on the sale and supply of petroleum and petroleum products, and arms and related *matériel* of all types, to Sierra Leone, along with other measures. We also look forward to a hitch-free implementation of the peace plan agreed in Conakry on 23 October between the ECOWAS Committee of Five on Sierra Leone and representatives of the junta. We are, of course, glad that the peace plan has been accepted by President Kabbah himself.

It is appropriate at this point to reiterate the need for the provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance in response to local needs in that particular country. It is equally important that all States and relevant international organizations continue to assist those countries that have to

grapple with the influx of refugees and displaced persons as a result of the crisis in Sierra Leone.

Along with other members of the international community, Nigeria welcomes the return of stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has great implications for broader subregional peace, security and development. We regret, however, that the Security Council has not been more forthcoming with regard to the situation in the neighbouring Republic of the Congo. The crisis in that country has resulted in the displacement of over two thirds of the residents of Brazzaville and in the extensive destruction of the city's infrastructure. The crisis has been further complicated by the involvement of external forces. We can only plead that all concerned pursue the logic of peace. In this regard, we commend the mediatory role of Gabon and other countries in the region for their efforts in favour of peace in the subregion.

One of the expressed desires of the members of the zone is for the South Atlantic to be free of nuclear weapons. The conclusion of the Treaty of Pelindaba, taken with the authority of the already established Treaty of Tlatelolco, will, when they both come into full operation, move us towards the realization of that goal. These two nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, together with the treaties of Raratonga and Bangkok and the Antarctic Treaty, are turning almost half of the globe into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This is a welcome development. In order to maintain that state of play, we call upon the nuclear-weapon States in particular to respect that status as well as the desire of the inhabitants of the southern hemisphere to keep the threat of nuclear weapons out of their horizon, out of their territories and out of their future.

Argentina has offered to host the fifth meeting of the zone in Buenos Aires in 1998. We are heartened by this offer, as it will afford us the opportunity to follow up on the different projects either envisaged or decided upon at the fourth high-level meeting of the zone in Somerset West, South Africa. These include cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and protection of the marine environment for the conservation of marine resources.

Another area of cooperation on which progress has been made in recent times — aside from trade and the sharing of industrial expertise and experience — is the effort to prohibit the dumping of radioactive and hazardous wastes. We welcome the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and

on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Together with other prohibition agreements that have been signed and the annual consensus resolutions that have been recommended by various General Assembly committees and adopted by the Assembly on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes and on the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes, this development has helped to establish accepted international norms on the subject.

As we look forward to the next high-level meeting of the zone, to be held in Buenos Aires in 1998, we wish to express appreciation to the Government of South Africa for hosting the fourth meeting of the members of the zone. We would also like to thank the South African delegation, as well as other members of the bureau of the Permanent Committee of the zone in New York, for their coordination efforts, including the preparation of this year's draft resolution, which is contained in document A/52/L.24/Rev.1.

In concluding, we wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/52/462. We also thank the United Nations agencies which have taken action in fulfilment of the various mandates given to them in resolution 51/19 of 1996.

Mr. Felício (Brazil): The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic is of great importance to Brazil. Our country had the honour to host two of the ministerial meetings of the members of the zone, the first in Rio de Janeiro in 1986, and the second in Brasilia in 1994. Brazil was present at the meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, in 1990, and took part in the fourth ministerial meeting, held in Somerset West, South Africa, in 1996. We look forward to the meeting to be held in Argentina next year.

The countries of Africa and South America on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean have taken the initiative to build a bridge of understanding across that vast expanse of sea between our shores. The aim is to foster mutual knowledge, increase cooperation, give new life to old ties, search for solutions to common problems, learn from each other's experiences and, where possible, act together in shaping a common future.

The near completion of the process of decolonization made it possible for the South Atlantic countries to establish closer political and economic relations and to further the endeavour of working towards more effective ways to build peace and prosperity. The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic is an attempt in that

direction that is gradually becoming an invaluable instrument to both African and South American countries.

The initiatives undertaken in the areas of protection of the marine environment, trade and economic competitiveness, cooperation against drug trafficking and prohibition of nuclear weapons point to priority areas where the States members of the zone wish to undertake joint action, and where they expect the support of the international community.

All members of the zone are parties to nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties — the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty for Africa (Treaty of Pelindaba) — and are seeking to strengthen the links of cooperation with the other nuclear-weapon-free zones of the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas, established by the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Raratonga) and the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Bangkok).

With the aim of assuring protection of the marine environment, especially the conservation of marine living resources and the prevention and containment of environmental accidents, the countries of the zone have started to exchange relevant information. This exercise should continue. In this context, the navies of some member States of the zone have been developing efforts to improve their capacity to work together.

Brazil has also sought to improve ways and means of cooperating with other members of the zone in the combat against the traffic in illicit drugs, a growing problem on the two sides of the Atlantic, and member countries have started to coordinate their activities in multilateral forums.

Another important area for the member countries of the zone is the promotion of democracy, political pluralism and national reconciliation. The draft resolution introduced today makes reference to developments in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Angola since last year and calls for increased humanitarian assistance for Liberia and Angola.

The Brazilian Government, within the limits of its resources, is committed to continued cooperation with other South Atlantic countries in all the areas I have mentioned. For the member countries of the zone, the approval of this draft resolution by the General Assembly

is an invaluable expression of the international community's support for peace and security, for cooperation and for economic and social development in a democratic environment, as expressed in the Final Declaration of the fourth meeting of the States members of the zone.

The African and South American countries members of the zone of peace and cooperation aim at erecting building blocks of cooperation, understanding, stability and prosperity. The Southern Cone Common Market, the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States are organizations that overlap with the zone and reinforce it. We are confident that, like similar texts in previous years, draft resolution A/52/L.24/Rev.1, which was introduced by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the States members of the zone, will receive general support.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.24/Rev.1.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/52/L.24/Rev.1, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal have become sponsors of the draft resolution.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg,

Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:
None

Abstaining:
United States of America

The draft resolution was adopted by 157 votes to none, with 1 abstention (resolution 52/14).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Andorra, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary and Uruguay informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Richier (France) (interpretation from French): France, with its partners in the European Union, voted in favour of the draft resolution. It gives its full support in particular to the paragraphs relating to Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

In this context, France wishes, nevertheless, to recall its traditional reservations as to the concept of zones of peace in general. I would particularly cite the geographical limits of such zones, the nature of the obligations upon States and respect for international law, particularly the law of the sea.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 32?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Draft resolutions (A/52/L.15, L.18, L.21, L.22)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.15.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.15, entitled "Proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace", on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, the Comoros, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Niger, Panama, Peru, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire. I must add that a number of other sponsors are to be included in the list, but for technical reasons their names do not appear in document A/52/L.15. The additional sponsors are Bhutan, the Dominican Republic, Georgia, Guyana, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nicaragua and Turkmenistan.

The Assembly will recall that the Economic and Social Council, on a proposal of Côte d'Ivoire with which some 30 other States associated themselves, adopted at its substantive session held in July 1997 in Geneva resolution 1997/47 recommending that the General Assembly, at its fifty-second session, proclaim the year 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace. Now, to follow up on that recommendation of the Council, the Assembly has before it this morning draft resolution A/52/L.15.

Among the key ideas that led to the creation of the United Nations, one must quite rightly give pride of place to the idea of a culture of peace, as contained in the preamble to the Charter, reflecting the determination of the

peoples of the world, having emerged from two world conflicts

"to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours".

We can thus see the concept of the culture of peace thus finds its source in the values and aspirations underpinning the foundation of the universal Organization that was created — and we can never repeat it often enough —

"to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

By and large, the idea of the culture of peace rests essentially on the repudiation of violence. It invokes all the values, attitudes and behaviours reflecting and furthering tolerance and solidarity. Its foundations are the principles of liberty, justice and democracy. The idea of the culture of peace seeks, lastly, to prevent conflicts at their source and to resolve problems through dialogue and negotiation.

The logic of mistrust and confrontation that characterized the cold war period frustrated the full expression of the culture of peace. Paradoxically, however, the end of the cold war, although bringing with it a multitude of beneficial changes — notably, in relations among countries — has not after all prevented the proliferation of explosions of violence, such as we have witnessed in numerous inter-ethnic conflicts in recent years.

The reality of this end of the century is all too full of scenes of armed conflict, civil war, genocide and wandering masses of refugees and displaced persons fleeing massacres. All this calls out to conscience and places the international community face to face with its responsibility in this arena.

With respect to this situation, we should in all honesty recognize the proven capability of the United Nations to manage crisis situations, as shown by its many successes in many different peacekeeping operations.

Decisive United Nations action in these situations has contributed to saving many human lives, which gives us enormous satisfaction, and we hope that everything possible will be done to enhance the United Nations

capability in the fields of peacekeeping, preventive action and emergency humanitarian assistance.

Nevertheless, we note that the specific timing of peacekeeping operations, inasmuch as they are always rapid responses to emergencies, restricts their long-term scope. As a result, they must necessarily be complemented by in-depth activities, especially educational activities, aimed at inculcating a culture of peace in the societies in question. Substantive work is therefore required so that the structures and institutional manifestations of war, and their deeper roots — namely, the culture of violence and war — can be transformed into a culture of peace.

The following extract from the preamble to the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), reflects precisely this same concern in affirming that

“since wars began in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”.

The transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace seems to us, therefore, to be the essential backdrop to all United Nations activities in dealing with the numerous challenges emerging on the horizon of the new millennium.

It is fitting here to pay a resounding tribute to UNESCO, which, under the dynamic leadership of its Director-General has set, as a priority goal for its work, raising awareness to promote the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. But in the final analysis, it is up to all of us, large and small nations alike, each at its own level and pace, to work jointly to accomplish this lofty undertaking that can only foster tolerance, solidarity and harmony between peoples and between nations.

It is in this spirit that Côte d'Ivoire initiated draft resolution A/52/L.15, recommending to the General Assembly the proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. We consider the choice of the year 2000 to be of fundamental importance in launching the promotion of the culture of peace at a global level.

The aim is to harness the symbolism inherent in the year 2000, as it is an emblem of, *inter alia*, ideas of renewal and hope for a more peaceful world. The year 2000 must help us reinvent peace. The beginning of the millennium should therefore be marked by a mobilization

of national and international public opinion, directed particularly towards young people, inviting them to make a difference and encouraging them to break once and for all with the behaviour patterns and attitudes of the recent and the more distant past, characterized by crises, wars and violence.

We remain convinced that launching an International Year for the Culture of Peace at the turn of the millennium can only help stimulate efforts by individuals, as well as by the international community, aimed at creating and promoting a culture of peace in people's minds, beginning with the next century.

The proclamation of an International Year for the Culture of Peace is intended as a force for raising public awareness, at the dawn of the new millennium, of the need for a culture of peace in the daily life of societies, with particular attention to young people.

The programme for and the financing of activities marking the celebration of the International Year for the Culture of Peace are in keeping with the guidelines adopted by the General Assembly. Indeed, UNESCO intends to take the necessary steps to coordinate a programme of activities that will be financed entirely by voluntary contributions.

In taking the initiative of introducing draft resolution A/52/L.15, Côte d'Ivoire retains the image that the entire world has of it, as a country of peace, tolerance, solidarity and shared happiness. The history of our young nation, fashioned by the enlightened vision of the father of modern Côte d'Ivoire, the late President Houphouët-Boigny, has been a happy succession of victories for peace that have inevitably given rise to prosperity. Since 1989 Côte d'Ivoire has marked 15 November as a day for the celebration of peace.

This pact with peace and progress is continuing harmoniously under President Henri Konan Bédié, who is furthermore sparing no effort in advancing democracy and a state of law through the constant practice of dialogue and consultation. The faithful commitment of Côte d'Ivoire to the culture of peace was brilliantly reaffirmed recently by President Henri Konan Bédié in a speech given on 23 March in Bamako, Mali, on the occasion of the Week of Peace, when he declared:

“For the Ivoirian, peace is a second religion. It is the most precious good that President Houphouët-Boigny bequeathed to us. In Côte d'Ivoire we think

of peace as something patiently constructed out of love for others, tolerance, justice and a common striving for development, all of which are propelled by constant dialogue and the quest for compromise. Our philosophy and our political practice, our actions and our energies, are all centred on the continuous and persistent search for peace through dialogue."

In 1989 the international dimension of peace was enshrined in Côte d'Ivoire with UNESCO's creation of the international Houphouët-Boigny Prize, awarded each year to

"honour people, institutions or organizations that have significantly contributed to promoting, seeking, safeguarding or maintaining peace."

This prize was awarded for the first time in 1991, to Presidents Nelson Mandela and Frederik de Klerk. They were followed in 1992 by The Hague Academy of International Law. The late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, President Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Shimon Peres were honoured in 1993, King Juan Carlos of Spain and President Jimmy Carter of the United States in 1994, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 1995. Most recently, in 1997, it was awarded to President Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen of Guatemala and Commander Rolando Morán, head of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), both of whom deserve credit for agreeing to put an end to 36 years of civil war in Guatemala.

We are delighted to note, as the report of the Secretary-General in document A/52/292 points out, that the culture of peace is being implemented by many other countries throughout the world. I need mention only a few of the many examples.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, ministerial-level meetings, seminars and training sessions have been organized by UNESCO on issues relating to human rights, democracy, peace and development. The culture of peace has already been introduced in university curriculums in the Caribbean. A mayors' prize for peace was awarded for the first time in the Caribbean and Latin America at the international congress on cities and education for the culture of peace, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in September 1996. The prize was awarded to Mrs. Gloria Cuertas Montoya, mayor of the city of Apartadó, Colombia.

Activities designed to promote the culture of peace are being undertaken by countries throughout Asia and the Pacific with the assistance of UNESCO, furthering tolerance, dialogue among cultures and cultural diversity.

In Africa, programmes targeting the culture of peace have been implemented for the demobilized military forces in Mozambique, Rwanda and other countries that have returned to peace after years of war. The teaching of this subject at schools and universities is also taking place in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Mozambique.

With regard to Mozambique, a country that has known the torments of civil war, it is particularly interesting to note the importance that that country attaches to the culture of peace, as is evident from the following extract from the statement of the President of Mozambique, Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on 22 October:

(spoke in English)

"We believe that the promotion and further consolidation of a culture of peace should be the next most important challenge to all societies as well as to each individual citizen." *[Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second session, Plenary Meetings, 35th meeting, p. 2]*

(spoke in French)

Peace, democracy and development are, today more than ever, crucial and indispensable elements for human development within a society committed to progress. Peace, democracy and development form an interactive triangle that gains its vitality from the culture of peace.

But peace remains a constant quest, a long-term endeavour that requires daily effort. We thus prepare for peace through a long process that takes into account all generations in society: by training children so that they can internalize and accept the values of peace; by re-educating adults so that they learn anew to accept racial differences, respect cultural diversity and live with tolerance; and by inviting the elderly to reach out in forgiveness and reconciliation, especially when the memory of the past is still alive.

We are on the eve of a new millennium. Globalization and the worldwide spread of all we do are

accelerating thanks to the extraordinary progress of science and technology and their dissemination.

The world is changing and we must adopt new behaviour patterns. We must resolutely turn our backs on the ordeals, horrors and errors of the past. We need to look to the future with confidence and to see to it that the twenty-first century is one of non-violence, peace, democracy, progress for all and shared happiness. That is why we must now move to give the culture of peace a chance.

I therefore hope that the General Assembly will adopt draft resolution A/52/L.15, entitled "Proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace", without a vote.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.18.

Ms. Ramírez (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.18, entitled "Year 2000: International Year of Thanksgiving", which is sponsored by Bangladesh, Brazil, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, the Marshall Islands, Nicaragua, Paraguay, the Philippines, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela as well as my own country, Argentina.

The sponsors of this initiative consider that it makes a contribution of the most far-reaching importance in order to give real meaning and depth to the concept of gratitude, and to lead us to reflect on how to develop and stimulate all those actions that contribute to understanding and national reconciliation.

The Republic of Argentina welcomes this initiative with particular interest as it shares in the concern about the situation that mankind is experiencing today, particularly the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. This situation has prompted our country to work actively in the international arena in areas afflicted by natural disasters, regional conflicts or other emergencies.

We live in times of profound global change that involve the entire world and that give rise to uncertainty and unease as to the future. In this context, it is a challenge for us to give new substance to our commitment and solidarity, leaving behind isolationist and individualist views of international relations or a memory of the past.

It is necessary, therefore, for there to be consensus as to the need to build international action in the field of cooperation and humanitarian assistance, on the basis of a joint effort by the international community.

In this sense, to proclaim the year 2000 as International Year of Thanksgiving — beyond the objective of highlighting once again the community of universal values that link the different peoples of the world — has a more profound meaning, insofar as the message of thanksgiving tends to alleviate the suffering and poverty resulting from natural disasters and warlike conflict through the search for equity and justice.

Likewise, we believe that this initiative will give future generations an opportunity to join in projects that strengthen international cooperation and share in cultural celebrations generating peace and reconciliation.

More than 50 years after the convening of the San Francisco Conference, we still have the same trust and hope in the work of the United Nations. We are convinced, moreover, that the process of reform the Organization is now undergoing, under the firm and well-reasoned stimulus of the Secretary-General, will lead to actions that will contribute to the development and progress of humanity.

In this context, the declaration of the year 2000 as International Year of Thanksgiving will provide a unique opportunity for us to come together again in the spirit which spurred the Organization's founders. It is this spirit that should guide our actions in order to realize the high ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

For all these reasons, we hope that draft resolution A/52/L.18 will be adopted.

The Acting Chairman: I now call on the representative of Japan to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.22.

Mr. Owada (Japan): It is my great honour to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.22 entitled "International Year of Volunteers, 2001".

The idea of an International Year of Volunteers originated in a policy forum, held jointly by the United Nations Volunteer Programme and the United Nations University in Japan in 1996, where I had the honour of being a keynote speaker. This initiative was subsequently endorsed by the 40 volunteer organizations attending the

Conference on International Volunteerism held in Washington, D.C., in May 1996. At the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council held in July this year, a draft resolution recommending that the General Assembly proclaim the year 2001 the International Year of Volunteers was submitted by 60 sponsoring countries, and was adopted as resolution 1997/44 at that session.

Volunteer service — the contributions that individuals make as non-profit and non-career activities to enhance the well-being of the less fortunate — has been a part of every civilization and society. Today, volunteers are active in a wide range of areas, including welfare, environment, education, human rights, and disaster relief, where efforts on a volunteer basis complement governmental activities in these fields at the grass-roots level. The need for volunteer efforts is greater now than ever before and likely to grow greater still. Yet, while the contribution of volunteers is vast, much of their work often goes unrecognized because it does not involve the payment of market wages and because it is often spontaneous, informal and unstructured.

In the field of activities of the United Nations, the United Nations Volunteers programme has, since its inauguration in 1971, been sending volunteers to serve in various areas such as development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and election support, responding to the needs of the international community and often complementing the work of United Nations agencies operating in these fields, while also extending support to volunteer activities in the international community. The programme plays a significant and valuable role that complements the activities of the United Nations as an integral part of them, and thereby increases the effectiveness of the activities of the United Nations as a whole. As it is the sole organization in the United Nations system with a mandate to act as promoter of volunteerism, international support to the United Nations Volunteer Programme should be further intensified.

The Government of Japan believes that the proclamation of an International Year of Volunteers would extend recognition and give increased legitimacy to volunteering, and as a result would expand significantly the number of people willing to offer their services. We believe that the year 2001, the opening year of the new century, will be a most auspicious moment to assess past achievements and give volunteer activities fresh encouragement. I wish to express the hope that all Member States will reaffirm and support the efforts of volunteers to contribute to the health and well-being of people everywhere, and endorse the draft resolution proclaiming

the International Year of Volunteers at this fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

The specific objectives of the Year would be to encourage increased recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteer service. As the forms and status of volunteering vary by country and by region, the International Year of Volunteers would be engendered from the locality and grassroots upward, and would not take the form of a world summit on volunteerism. Under our draft resolution, the United Nations Volunteer Programme will be designated as the focal point for the promotion of the Year in the United Nations system; the Programme can offer useful service as a facilitator in preparing for and implementing the Year, in close collaboration with Governments, the United Nations system and civil society.

The Assembly has before it two draft resolutions proclaiming the year 2001 the International Year of Volunteers. As a matter of procedure, the Secretariat distributed draft resolution A/52/L.21, which has the same content as the resolution adopted at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council last July. However, there are 123 sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.22; in addition to those countries mentioned in it, they now include Barbados, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Liberia, Nepal, Norway, Mali, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uruguay. All of them have become sponsors after the submission of the draft resolution, and would like to propose that action be taken only on A/52/L.22, the shorter version of the draft resolution. Draft resolution A/52/L.22 represents the result of efforts by the sponsors to avoid the repetition of adopting in the General Assembly a draft resolution with precisely the same content as the resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council. Accordingly, A/52/L.21 can be seen as a reference to A/52/L.22. I hope that this proposal of the sponsors, guided by the spirit of desiring to rationalize the work of the General Assembly, will be accepted in that spirit by all Member States.

The Acting President: In view of the statement by the representative of Japan, may I take it that the General Assembly decides not to take action on draft resolution A/52/L.21?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/52/L.15, L.18 and L.22, one by one.

We turn first to draft resolution A/52/L.15, entitled "Proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.15?

Draft resolution A/52/L.15 was adopted (resolution 52/15).

The Acting President: We turn next to draft resolution A/52/L.18, entitled "Year 2000: International Year of Thanksgiving".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.18?

Draft resolution A/52/L.18 was adopted (resolution 52/16).

The Acting President: We now turn to draft resolution A/52/L.22, entitled "International Year of Volunteers, 2001".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.22?

Draft resolution A/52/L.22 was adopted (resolution 52/17).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 12.

Agenda item 17

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President: In view of recent developments pertaining to sub-item (e), "Appointment of members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal", the consideration of that sub-item is postponed to a later date to be announced.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides

not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

(a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/670)

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee recommends in paragraph 8 of its report that the General Assembly should appoint the following persons as members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 1998: Mr. Ioan Barac, Mr. Hasan Jawarneh, Mr. Mahamane Amadou Maiga, Mr. E. Besley Maycock and Mr. C. S. M. Mselle.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to appoint those persons?

It was so decided.

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/671)

The Acting President: In paragraph 7 of the report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should appoint the following persons as members of the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 1998: Mr. Uldis Blukis, Mr. David Etuket, Mr. Ihor V. Humenny, Mr. David Leis, Mr. Prakash Shah and Mr. Kazuo Watanabe.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint the persons recommended above?

It was so decided.

(c) **Appointment of a member of the Board of Auditors**

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/672)

The Acting President: In paragraph 4 of the report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should appoint the Comptroller and Auditor-General of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as a member of the United Nations Board of Auditors for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 July 1998.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to appoint this person?

It was so decided.

(d) **Confirmation of the appointment of members of the Investments Committee**

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/673)

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee, in paragraph 4 of its report, recommends that the General Assembly should confirm the appointment by the Secretary-General of the following persons as members of the Investments Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 1998: Mr. Ahmad Abdullatif, Mr. Fernando Chico Pardo and Mr. J. Y. Pillay.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to confirm the appointment of those persons?

It was so decided.

(f) **Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission**

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/675)

The Acting President: In paragraph 5 of the report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should appoint the following persons as members of the International Civil Service Commission for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 1998: Mr. Mario Bettati, Mr. Joao Augusto de Medicis, Ms. Lucretia Myers, Mr. Alexis Stephanou and Mr. Ku Tashiro.

In the same paragraph, the Fifth Committee also recommends that the General Assembly should appoint

Mr. Alexei Fedotov to fill the remainder of a four-year term of office expiring on 31 December 2000.

May I take it that the General Assembly appoints these persons?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (a) to (d) and sub-item (f) of agenda item 17?

It was so decided.

(g) **Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee**

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/676)

The Acting President: In paragraph 5 of the report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should appoint the following persons as members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 1998: Mr. Tadanori Inomata, Mr. Gerhard Kuntzle, Mr. Vladimir V. Kuznetsov, Mr. Philip Richard Okanda Owade, Mr. Carlos Dante Riva and Ms. Susan Shearouse.

May I take it that the General Assembly appoints these persons?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee also decided to postpone to a later meeting the remaining two appointments, from the group of African States and the group of Asian States, respectively.

We have concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 17.

Agenda item 34

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the
Economic Cooperation Organization**

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/313)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.20)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.20.

Mr. Asadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me first express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/52/313, which was prepared in response to paragraph 7 of resolution 51/21 of 27 November 1996. It is a very good, interesting and informative report, which renders it unnecessary for me to go into details.

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to regional cooperation. We believe that the current trend towards strengthening regional cooperation will certainly contribute not only to the well-being of the people of regional countries but also to the growth of the world economy. From our perspective, the United Nations in its entirety, and its specialized agencies and funds and programmes in particular, can indeed play a very active and constructive role in this regard. The United Nations system can, *inter alia*, contribute to identifying areas of, and exploring potential for, subregional, regional and interregional cooperation. The important and valuable activities currently being undertaken in this regard by the regional commissions deserve to be commended. In this particular connection, the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes and supports the efforts of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in promoting cooperation between major subregional organizations in Asia and the Pacific, including the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). The third consultative meeting of the heads of ECO, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was coordinated by ESCAP and held at Tehran, Iran, constitutes a prominent example of the effective contribution of regional commissions to the promotion of regional-development cooperation.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as one of the founders of the Economic Cooperation Organization, which comprises 10 countries from West, South and Central Asia

and the Caucasus, spares no efforts for the realization of ECO objectives. As host to the ECO headquarters in Tehran, Iran continues to contribute to the strengthening and expanding of ECO's role and activities in various fields, in accordance with the development policies and priorities of its member States. We are happy to note that ECO has been able to register impressive achievements in such varied fields as communications, land, sea and air transportation, networks of transnational oil and gas pipelines, energy, trade, exchange of information and human-resource development.

Development of infrastructure in the ECO region is considered a vital area for enhanced regional economic cooperation. Transport and communications, along with energy and water supplies, are of particular importance to ECO members. With the inauguration in 1996 of the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railroad linking Iran and Turkmenistan the long-cherished dream of access to free waters by the landlocked countries of Central Asia finally came true. This new facility opened a valuable window of opportunity to the Central Asian landlocked countries to embark on the expansion of their trade ties with the outside world through the Iranian nationwide railroad system, providing those countries with the shortest and most economical access to the major seaports of the Persian Gulf in the southern direction and to Europe in the western direction.

Cooperation between the United Nations and subregional and regional organizations, as recognized and encouraged by the Charter, is bound to have a positive impact not only on the daily lives of the peoples in the regions but also on the promotion of peace and stability at all levels. The Islamic Republic of Iran is fully cognizant of the multidimensional, positive impact of regional economic cooperation and also of the constructive role of the United Nations system in this process. We support the current cooperation between the United Nations and ECO and encourage the relevant United Nations bodies, agencies, funds and programmes to strengthen further their consultation, cooperation and coordination with ECO in various fields and areas. Higher and better utilization of the enormous potentialities in the ECO region in different fields and areas will certainly be beneficial, both within and outside the region.

I should now like to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/52/L.20 and to point out a number of changes, which I shall present orally at the end of my introduction.

Representing the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the current coordinator of the ECO contact group in New York, I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly, on behalf of its sponsors the draft resolution under the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization". The report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the agenda item under consideration shows that cooperation between the United Nations and ECO has evolved in a satisfactory manner and presents a very promising outlook. Optimal utilization of the existing potentialities in the ECO region in various fields and areas will indeed be much facilitated and rendered more efficient and effective through the assistance of the United Nations system, in particular its specialized agencies involved in the field of operational activities.

Draft resolution A/52/L.20 is, as a matter of fact, an updated version of a similar resolution adopted by the General Assembly last year, with, of course, a few additions. It reflects the state of cooperation between the two organizations. While laying out the background of that cooperation and taking stock of the achievements so far, the draft resolution is also forward-looking in its approach to the future.

Addressing the future of a positively evolving relationship between the United Nations and ECO, the draft resolution spells out the areas of general cooperation with the United Nations system and also puts forward a number of areas of priority for ECO and its member States. I shall underline just a few of the salient points in this regard.

The draft resolution invites the Secretary-General of the United Nations to continue his efforts, in consultation with his ECO counterpart, to promote and expand cooperation and coordination between the two organizations. It urges the United Nations specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the system to continue and increase consultations and cooperation with ECO. It invites relevant international financial institutions to give appropriate consideration to ECO's projects and programmes, including those in the ECO priority areas of transport and communications, and it invites ESCAP to play a more active role in promoting cooperation with ECO.

I should now, on behalf of the sponsors, like to indicate some changes to the text, which I shall present orally.

In the second line of the fourth preambular paragraph, which begins "Bearing in mind," the year "1997" should be corrected to "1977", and the year "1977" farther along in that line should be changed to "1996".

In paragraph 6, the words "Calls upon" at the beginning of the paragraph should be replaced with the word "Invites". In the second line of the same paragraph, the first word, "favourable," should be replaced with the word "appropriate".

Lastly, in paragraph 8, line 5, the words "inter alia" should be inserted after the words "technical assistance".

To conclude, let me just add on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.20, as orally amended, that this draft resolution represents a humble effort on the part of a dynamic regional organization in a sensitive area of the world. It reflects the dedication of ECO to the further promotion of regional cooperation and the attainment of higher levels of economic well-being and development for its member States and the region at large.

Having said that, on behalf of the sponsors, I invite the General Assembly to adopt by consensus the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.20, as orally amended, as the Assembly did in the case of a similar draft resolution last year.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/2 of 13 October 1993, I now call on the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Mr. Onder Ozar.

Mr. Ozar (Economic Cooperation Organization): As the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), it is my privilege and honour to address this body on an agenda item which is of vital importance for the member States of our organization.

The Economic Cooperation Organization is a regional grouping devoted to the socio-economic well-being of its 10 member States, which are located in a region that encompasses more than 7 million square kilometres and is inhabited by nearly 320 million people. In this richly endowed region, ECO is playing a pivotal role to promote economic cooperation among member countries and provide the framework for an infrastructural network connecting the newly independent Republics of Central Asia and Azerbaijan to the rest of

the world through the road, maritime and air links of the neighbouring countries: Iran, Pakistan and Turkey.

I would like to inform representatives that soon after its expansion in November 1992 from three to 10 member States, ECO embarked upon a comprehensive restructuring and reorganization. Two plans of action were adopted in 1993, namely the Quetta Plan of Action and the Istanbul Declaration, both stipulating concrete targets to be achieved in the next 10 years, as well as a project-oriented Almaty Outline Plan for the Development of Transport Sector in the ECO Region. Lately, at the Fourth ECO Summit Meeting in Ashgabat in May 1996, an overall strategy for the ECO region and several documents on the reorganization and restructuring of ECO were adopted. Moreover, steps have been taken to establish regional institutions. Currently, ECO is in the process of implementing those decisions.

So as to pursue our objectives in a coordinated manner and in harmony with the global trends, we are working closely with the United Nations and its specialized agencies towards the attainment of our common objectives in the ECO region. ECO acquired observer status at the United Nations on 13 October 1993 through resolution 48/2. Cooperation between the United Nations and ECO has been further strengthened through the adoption of resolutions 50/1 and 51/21, adopted respectively on 12 October 1995 and 27 November 1996. These resolutions are helping to facilitate and strengthen ECO's relations with the major agencies of the United Nations system. We have established cooperative relationships with several United Nations agencies and funds and programmes that are now carrying out joint activities with ECO. They include the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). ECO has jointly held three important conferences with UNFPA and four workshops with UNICEF. Our cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has also grown considerably and is expanding. Currently, several projects are being carried out jointly. UNDCP has also worked out a project proposal to assist in the implementation of ECO's plan on drug control. Similarly, UNDP is preparing a study on the economies and resource complementarities of ECO member States, a draft of which has already been circulated among member States. The holding of a workshop, with the participation

of UNDP, to discuss the outcome of this study is under consideration. Also, another study on enhancing the effectiveness of the new wing of the ECO secretariat comprising research and project units has been carried out by a UNDP senior consultant. We are grateful to have received the working draft of this study, which has been circulated among member States for consideration.

In view of the growing trend towards interregional cooperation, ECO is also part of an annual consultative process with Asia's major subregional organizations, which is coordinated by ESCAP. The third consultative meeting of the heads of these organizations was held in Tehran last May. Details of these joint efforts of ECO and United Nations agencies are reflected in good measure in the report of the Secretary-General of 29 August 1997, which is contained in document A/52/313 and has been submitted under the present agenda item.

In my view, we have now reached a stage where we need to evolve a joint strategy for closer cooperation and coordination between ECO and the United Nations agencies to pursue the optimum utilization of opportunities offered by the vast human and resource potential of the ECO region. The draft resolution submitted under this agenda item reflects this need and also provides a number of proposals and guidelines for future courses of action. I seek the cooperation of all members in supporting the draft resolution that is before the General Assembly, which, among other things, calls upon the relevant international financial institutions to give favourable consideration to helping to implement regional infrastructural plans and projects, including ECO programmes spelt out in the important Declaration adopted at the Extraordinary Summit Meeting held in Ashgabat in May 1997. That Declaration, *inter alia*, provides for the establishment of a comprehensive transport and communications infrastructure and a network of transnational oil and gas pipelines in the ECO region. In fact, this programme aims at providing the landlocked countries in the region with greater mobility to promote interregional trade and to establish mutually beneficial economic and commercial interaction with other regions for greater cooperation between the two organizations in the years ahead.

Before I conclude my statement, I wish to thank Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for extending his full cooperation to our organization in promoting our shared aims and economic development objectives in the region. Let me also express our earnest hope that the cooperation between the United

Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization will further expand and strengthen in various fields and areas, *inter alia*, through effective liaison between the two organizations.

I wish the General Assembly every success in its deliberations.

The Acting President: At the request of the sponsors, action on draft resolution A/52/L.20 is postponed until tomorrow morning.

Programme of work

The President in the Chair.

The President: I should like to make an announcement concerning agenda item 20, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", which is scheduled to be

taken up next week, on Monday, 24 November, in the morning.

The Assembly will consider agenda item 20 together with its sub-items, with the exception of sub-item (c) on "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan". Sub-item (c) will be considered together with agenda item 43 at a later date.

In view of the large number of draft resolutions expected under this item and of the possible need to hold consultations on them with a view to reaching consensus, I would urge members to submit those draft resolutions as soon as possible, and in any event not later than Monday, 1 December. In this regard, I should like to inform members that the next meeting of the informal consultations on this item will take place next week, on Wednesday, 26 November, in the morning, in Conference Room 8.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

**General Assembly**

Fifty-second Session

51st

plenary meeting

Friday, 21 November 1997, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Udovenko (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 38

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/513)**Draft resolution (A/52/L.28)**

The President: Today we are discussing an important item relating to ways and mechanisms to enhance support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments aimed at promoting and consolidating new or restored democracies. It has become increasingly clear that the recent dramatic changes in the international arena have given a powerful impetus to the global process of democratization. Since the first International Conference of Newly Restored Democracies, held at Manila in 1988, we have witnessed the emergence of a great number of countries that have fulfilled their peoples' aspirations by joining the family of States that have been following the path of freedom, justice and democracy for many decades — or centuries.

The Managua Declaration and Plan of Action endorsed in 1994 at the second conference, the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, emphasized the need for active involvement by the United Nations system in this expanding process.

The final document of the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, held at Bucharest, reiterated the great importance of the United Nations system in helping the new or restored democracies to meet the challenges before them.

Today, in pursuance of the document's recommendation, we shall discuss new ideas and suggestions as to the enhancement of the role of the United Nations system in supporting democracy and good governance in those States, as well as providing assistance in the accomplishment of their priority tasks. I believe that placing the issue of further development of the new and restored democracies under the broad United Nations umbrella gains ever more relevance and importance in the light of the ongoing process of United Nations renewal and reform. Particular attention should be paid to methods of strengthening the mechanisms for monitoring the formation and development of those States so that specific assistance can be made promptly available and deliverable. I also believe that the deeper involvement of the United Nations in this continuous worldwide process of democratization will greatly benefit the Organization itself in its period of essential structural transformations aimed at, *inter alia*, further democratization of its procedures and functioning methods.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite delegations to make their constructive contribution towards forging closer cooperation between Governments



and the United Nations in the field of promotion and consolidation of new and restored democracies.

I now call on the representative of Romania to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.28.

Mr. Gorita (Romania): On the threshold of the year 2000, we have an unprecedented opportunity to live in an open world — a world of permanent communication and interaction. Its perpetual movement cannot be stopped. Globalization cannot be assimilated to its mere economic dimension. Globalization means, above all, consecration of universal values and symbolic assets. It means broader knowledge and, consequently, better understanding and cooperation.

The world today is no longer a space of cold war, irreconcilably divided between friends and foes. The changes that are taking place require that we involve ourselves in a process of rethinking global society and inter-human relations. The political sphere can no longer be conceived as a separate space, governed by rules that are understood only by professionals and inaccessible to the majority. Governance should be understood as the best way of building togetherness — as a set of practices aimed at uniting all the major components of society around common projects.

Effective democracy should not only allow participation in decision-making, but also lead to development and prosperity for all. Genuine development does not occur in a political vacuum. It depends on the empowerment of communities to influence decisions and to articulate demands. Development without democracy is impaired if it brings benefits only to a few elites.

That is why the assertion that democracy, development and respect for human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing is so valid. Their interaction enhances the impact on their respective societies. The Governments that foster respect for democracy and human rights and subserve development efforts to the benefit of the entire society acquire a higher profile, domestically and internationally. Many success stories in the developing world stand as proof.

The international community has started to pay greater and deeper attention to the role that democratic values can play in solving long-standing national issues and in improving the international environment. These debates are amplifying and taking a variety of forms. My country has been involved in many of them.

This year, Romania had the honour of hosting the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development. The Conference enjoyed the participation of almost 80 countries and 47 non-governmental organizations from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. The political document entitled "Progress Review and Recommendations", circulated as document A/52/334, which was adopted by consensus, acknowledges the emergence of new thinking about democratic values and their potential for making democracy work in the service of development and prosperity. A comprehensive and far-reaching analysis of the democratic processes which have been taking place recently gives special value to that document. The ministers and representatives of the new or restored democracies who met in Bucharest reaffirmed their commitment to the process of democratization in their societies.

They acknowledged the relationship of interdependence and mutual reinforcement that exists between democracy, development and good governance. They concluded that democratization is a world movement based on shared values, which embraces North and South, East and West, and transcends traditional confrontational lines. The Bucharest document identified an almost universal recognition that a democratic system of government is the best model to ensure a framework of liberties for lasting solutions to political, economic and social problems. The participants admitted that the real challenge today is how to strengthen democracy through the practices of efficient government in order to promote sustainable development.

A substantial part of the Bucharest document is devoted to recommendations addressing the vital areas that are significant for the consolidation of democratic societies. These are, in the first place, guidelines for strengthening policies and principles addressed to Governments in the fields of human rights, judicial reform, corruption, organized crime, decentralization, participation in political life, elections, gender equality, civic education, accountability and transparency, media, and civil service reform. Secondly, they include recommendations related to civil society and the private sector, to donor countries and the international community, and to the United Nations system and the international financial organizations.

I will not insist on presenting these realistic and action-oriented conclusions. They are to the merit of the ministers and other Bucharest Conference participants

who achieved a splendid exercise in political willingness. I am convinced that the document, entitled simply "Progress Review and Recommendations", will provide a useful benchmark in future discussions on democracy and its relationship to development.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to reiterate from this rostrum our wholehearted gratitude all the Governments and organizations that participated in, supported and made concrete and valuable contributions to the success of the Conference.

As you are aware, the Bucharest Conference is part of a series that started in Manila in 1988 and continued in Managua in 1994. This movement has given a strong momentum to the process of global and regional democratization. Although the intergovernmental conferences on democracy started quite independently from the United Nations, since 1994 the Organization has become more actively involved in this domain.

General Assembly resolution 51/31, adopted by consensus last year, asked the Secretary-General to present a report at the fifty-second session including, among other things, innovative ways and means to enable the United Nations to respond effectively and in an integrated manner to requests of Member States for assistance in the field of democratization.

Further to this resolution, the Secretary-General has submitted an excellent report, contained in document A/52/513, that focuses on policies and principles, and gives a comprehensive account of relevant recent events which are shaping the emerging framework for intergovernmental action in support of new or restored democracies.

I wish to express the satisfaction of the Romanian Government with respect to the observations and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report.

First, the value of the electoral assistance provided or coordinated by the United Nations is unquestionable. The potential of the United Nations in this respect should be further considered in the new international environment, where democratization efforts have become more prevalent.

Secondly, we should underline again the important role of civil society in the democratization processes. As noted in the report, the proposal of the Third International Conference that the United Nations should arrange a larger forum for representatives of non-governmental

organizations to discuss democratization and the role of civil society in order to follow up on the results of the Bucharest Conference has a bearing on a recommendation on a people's millennium assembly contained in the reform package under consideration at this Assembly session. We encourage the Secretary-General to discuss those ideas further.

Thirdly, we fully agree that the peace-building and development, democratization and governance efforts of the Organization are distinct but mutually reinforcing. This underlines the importance for the United Nations system to improve its ability to cooperate and to coordinate its actions. Like the Secretary-General, we hope that the integration of more effective United Nations work on democratization and good governance into the reform process will be possible.

Fourthly, we welcome the essential conclusion of the Secretary-General that the universal principle of democracy has more practical relevance to United Nations activities now than ever before. The United Nations is expected to work with a greater unity of purpose and coherence. We are happy to ascertain the readiness of the United Nations system to form a part of the follow-up mechanism to the Third International Conference. A reformed Organization oriented to the twenty-first century should promote democratization, as it will continue to work for peace, security and development.

On a more general note, I would like to praise the format and the substance of the Secretary-General's report on item 38. The concision, vision and modernity that are features of the report augur well for the profile of the Organization in the next millennium.

Romania, in its capacity as current Chairman of the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, has the particular privilege to submit to the General Assembly the draft resolution on agenda item 38, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" [A/52/L.28 and Add.1].

I am honoured to do so on behalf of the following sponsors: Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El

Salvador, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Namibia, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uruguay, Zambia, and my own country, Romania.

In its preamble, the draft resolution reiterates the set of principles agreed upon by the General Assembly at previous sessions. It takes note of some events relevant to the subject we are now considering that have taken place this year. The draft resolution also takes note of important new documents adopted in international forums, namely the Progress Review and Recommendations adopted at the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development and the Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council.

In the operative part of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would welcome the report presented by the Secretary-General at the fifty-second session and express appreciation for the observations and recommendations contained in the report.

The decision of the Third International Conference to hold the next conference in Africa and the offer of the Government of Benin to host the Conference would both be welcomed.

The General Assembly would commend the Secretary-General, and through him the United Nations system, for the activities undertaken at the request of Governments to support the efforts to consolidate democracy.

It would recognize the important role that the Organization has to play in providing support to the efforts of Governments to achieve democratization within the context of development efforts.

The General Assembly would encourage the Secretary-General to continue to improve the capacity of the United Nations to respond effectively to the requests of

Member States through support of their efforts to achieve the goals of good governance and democratization. Member States would be further encouraged to promote democratization.

The Secretary-General, Member States, the relevant specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, would be invited to contribute to the follow-up process of the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies.

Finally, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, and would decide to include in the provisional agenda of that session the item entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The draft resolution before us represents a reasonable response from the General Assembly to one of the most promising and challenging changes that distinguish the world society at present. The 80 sponsors, including my own delegation, hope that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote, as has been the case since the first introduction of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly.

Mrs. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia — have aligned themselves with this statement. The associated country of Cyprus and the member of the European Free Trade Association participating in the European Economic Area, Norway, have also aligned themselves with this statement.

Respect for democracy and the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms are the three pillars of our modern societies. We welcome the fact that this decade has seen many racist, dictatorial and oppressive regimes replaced by Governments with the avowed aim of respecting the will of their people. The democratization process under way must continue until all States members of this Organization are governed according to the principles of democracy.

Democratic systems may take many forms, which are rooted in the specific conditions of their social structure. However, be they federal or unitary, presidential or parliamentary, they all embody a set of essential common values, *inter alia*, the freedom of citizens to express themselves through free and transparent elections, and the active development and strengthening of civil society. Civil society must ensure that values constantly change and evolve in a peaceful manner.

Democracy is also synonymous with pluralism, which nourishes the dynamic interaction of the nation's actors on a basis of mutual respect. Peoples must enjoy freedom of association and the possibility of forming political parties, and thus of playing an active part in the political life of their country.

Another key element of a democratic system is the separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers. Full respect for human rights and protection of the rights of ethnic, religious or political minorities are an integral part of a democratic system, as are freedom of opinion and of the press. In a democracy, the reality of political life must be expressed in a process of dynamic interaction between the people and their representatives. The role of non-governmental organizations is particularly important in that respect.

The European Union welcomes the fact that the report of the Secretary-General [A/52/513] gives an extensive analysis of the various forms of support which the international community affords to new or restored democracies and a detailed review of the activities undertaken by the United Nations to promote and consolidate the democratization process. The report stresses that these activities cannot be implemented separately, but instead should complement the substantial efforts made by the United Nations to foster human development, *inter alia* by creating effective, responsible and transparent systems of government. By the same token, these activities must be integrated into United Nations peace-building and peacekeeping operations in the field.

The European Union supports and stresses the importance of United Nations efforts, *inter alia*, by the Electoral Assistance Division, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, to promote democratization. In that regard, it particularly wishes to commend the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in support of the democratization process.

In the past year, we have attended two international conferences on democratization and governance. The Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development held in Bucharest from 2 to 4 September 1997 and the UNDP International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity herald a new approach to international cooperation in the field of democratization.

The European Union feels that the Civil Society Forum, organized during the Bucharest Conference, is an important step towards integrating citizens and their organizations into the democratization process. In this context, we welcome the organization of regional seminars by representatives of civil society in May 1997 at Imatra in Finland and Svetogorsk in Russia, and we would like to encourage such regional initiatives.

As the Secretary-General of the United Nations noted in his report, one of the chief questions raised at the Bucharest Conference, in which 80 delegations took part, concerns methods of monitoring the progress of democratization. The European Union is following with interest the proposal to set up a specific mechanism to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions. The European Union also welcomes the decision taken at the Third International Conference to hold the next conference in an African country.

With regard to the International Conference on Governance held in New York from 28 to 30 July 1997, the European Union welcomes the fact that, for the first time, representatives of Governments and civil society were able to meet together in the General Assembly Hall. The European Union endorses the conclusions of the Conference that good governance is synonymous with governance that is effective, participatory, transparent, accountable and equitable and promotes the rule of law. The State, in close collaboration with the private sector and civil society, must lead the way with regard to good governance.

The European Union and its member States have committed themselves firmly to the promotion of democratization and the transition towards permanent and democratic systems of government. This commitment has taken a variety of forms. Thus, the Union has introduced a cooperation and development policy emphasizing positive actions to defend human rights and promote democracy. The European Union is, likewise, implementing numerous projects to support the rule of

law, the transition towards democracy and the strengthening of non-governmental organizations and other institutions which seek to promote the emergence of a pluralistic society. It actively and strongly supports the activities of the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies of the United Nations to promote the democratization process.

The United Nations must establish both the durability and the universality of democratic values, while taking account of the extreme diversity of situations around the world. The institution of democratic systems is the best way to prevent conflicts and carries the promise of prosperity and the affirmation of individual values. That is why the international community must encourage and promote efforts to put these aspirations into practice through the United Nations system.

The European Union endorses the Secretary-General's recommendations concerning electoral assistance, the strengthening of civil society and the coordination of all United Nations activities in the field of democratization and governance. The European Union will continue to give active support to all these efforts.

Mr. Kasanda (Zambia): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/52/513 on "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". The report is very informative and should go a long way towards facilitating our deliberations.

My delegation also expresses its thanks to the Permanent Representative of Romania for circulating, in document A/52/334, the "Progress Review and Recommendations" of the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, held in Bucharest, Romania, from 2 to 4 September 1997. Zambia had the privilege of being represented at that Conference, and it is the hope of my delegation that the international community will undertake concrete follow-up activities to implement its recommendations.

Mrs. Camara (Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The question of democracy is increasingly becoming an important factor in national and international affairs. In fact, the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies noted that democratization is a world movement. We are, today, seeing democracy

expanding around the world, with a majority of the world's people now living under democracies.

Against this background, the need to promote efforts to encourage education for democracy and open all future conferences on democracy to all interested United Nations Member States becomes cardinal.

In paragraph 27 of his report, the Secretary-General makes an important observation:

"Democracy is not a model to be copied but a goal to be attained." [A/52/513, para. 27]

Many countries that are democratizing face diverse challenges which no single inflexible model of democracy can be used to meet. Poverty and inequality, social, religious, tribal and/or ethnic intolerance, and economic and political instability are major challenges to democracy. Meeting these challenges will depend on the peculiar circumstances of each country that is undergoing democratization.

Developing countries like mine which have regular consultations with representatives of the donor community on democracy and good governance are keenly interested in this distinction made by the Secretary-General. All too often, these consultations have tended to lose their value when donors attempt to micro-manage the process of democratization in a given country, without due respect for the peculiar circumstances of the country in question.

However, at the end of the day, all of us who are democratizing agree that basic fundamentals must be met, among them the promotion of the existence of representative government elected by the majority of the population through secret ballot, in regular periodic and genuine elections, as well as the promotion of party competition, an independent judiciary, guarantees of fundamental human rights and individual freedoms, transparency and accountability under the rule of law, a free and independent press and the growth of civil society.

My country began its democratization process in 1991. We are now in the phase of consolidating that process. In this phase, Zambia will look to the United Nations system to provide concrete assistance in various areas related to democracy, good governance and development. We are, in this regard, happy to note that the Secretary-General has registered his readiness, in

paragraph 7 of his report, to provide such assistance to interested countries.

The Bucharest Conference came out with important recommendations, all of which are detailed in document A/52/334. I would, however, like to give particular emphasis to the recommendation related to the external debt problems of developing countries. As the Bucharest Conference noted, the external debt problems of developing countries continue to be a serious threat to democratization. It is critical that the international community promote enhanced debt relief for developing countries so as to improve their fiscal situation and overall development prospects. The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative is a welcome development in this regard. Improvements in the form of quicker access to the Initiative and ensuring that HIPC relief is adequately funded are needed in order to make it more effective.

Related to the question of durable debt relief is the issue of official development assistance (ODA) flows to developing countries. Both bilateral and multilateral official development assistance flows to developing countries are declining. When we add this to the poor access that the export products of developing countries have to the markets of developed countries, and volatile currency markets, such a state of affairs is a recipe for making the process of democratization unstable and intolerable. Obviously, the international community does not want such an outcome. In order to promote international cooperation for democracy and development effectively, there is need to establish a new consensus on the financing of development. In this connection, my delegation can only reiterate the need to convene an international conference on the financing of development, as a matter of urgency.

Let me conclude by stating that as a sponsor of the draft resolution under this item on our agenda, my delegation hopes and expects that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Eitel (Germany): Let me first of all state that my delegation fully associates itself with the statement just delivered by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

Germany, together with some 30 other countries, attended as an observer the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, which took place with great success this past September in Bucharest. Yet somehow the category "observer" does not quite seem to capture the very

particular situation we find ourselves in: Germany is not an "unconcerned bystander", merely following the problems, challenges and hazards of new and restored democracies with interest. Germany itself is — in its eastern part, where close to a quarter of the German population lives — a newly restored democracy. And while a number of circumstances set this situation apart from that of many other new or restored democracies, there are also many striking similarities, parallels and common experiences.

The German people in its entirety is proud, and I believe justly so, of the peaceful revolution which took place in eastern Germany almost eight years ago. The enduring and inspiring symbol of that revolution was, of course, the fall of the Berlin Wall, which in turn came to epitomize the end of the cold war and also the beginning of another wave of democratization.

Let me say a few words as to where Germany stands now, seven years after unification. The effects of unification still determine political life at the level of the country as a whole, the federal states, and the local authorities. For millions of people in the new federal states, daily life has taken a decisive turn for the better. Freedom, democracy and the opportunity for material well-being are no longer restricted to the western part of the country. In a country that had been divided for more than four decades, a socialist economic and political system had to be remodelled according to the principles of a social market economy. People in the new *Länder* found themselves confronted with a transformation process that for many of them amounted to an abrupt change of their conditions of life, and a sometimes painful break with identities, life plans and orientations.

Despite tremendous difficulties, the process of economic unification has been largely a successful one, although a lot remains to be done. For example, in the new federal states many jobs were initially lost in the transition from socialist planning to a market economy. Today, however, there are indications that recovery is under way. Progress on the other aspect of the unification process has been slower. Shedding 40 years spent under a socialist regime is not easy. Information and education of citizens with regard to the functioning and the values of a democratic State is one of the basic tasks which not only the State but other institutions and actors of civil society as well have to take upon themselves. To become a conscious and responsible citizen means to know and to accept the political, legal and moral foundations of the State.

The Secretary-General has provided us with an insightful report on the question of "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" [A/52/513]. My Government has carefully studied the results of the Bucharest Conference, which have been circulated as a United Nations document [A/52/334].

Over the past few years, it has been most encouraging to see a consensus emerge regarding the different components and factors which aid the establishment of a democratic system and which in turn benefit from the existence of such a system. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action clearly sets out the most fundamental of these relationships:

"Democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives." [A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chapter III, para. 8]

The Agenda for Development states that efforts to promote democracy and good governance are fundamental to the consolidation of peace and development.

One of the self-evident but nevertheless important lessons that we can draw from these different efforts is that we have to view the various notions and concepts as interrelated and interdependent — or, as we say at the United Nations, mutually reinforcing. Good governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, development, peace and democracy do not exist in isolation. They are also the indispensable requirements for economic and social development. People want to enjoy the benefits of democratization. It is in this area that Governments bear a special responsibility. They have to create the conditions for economic growth through investment, for social justice, and for offering all sectors of the population education, health and other social services.

What are the consequences for the United Nations system? The United Nations and its different programmes have to contribute to creating the environment for good governance and democratization. But if one focuses on the role of the United Nations in a more circumscribed manner, it is the area of electoral assistance which comes to mind first.

The report of the Secretary-General rightly points out that the United Nations system does not endorse or promote any specific form of government. The report furthermore, and in our view again rightly so, states that observation of elections will not suffice as a yardstick for measuring democratization. But democratic elections continue to be the hallmark of a functioning democratic system. The United Nations, as an impartial actor, should continue to offer, at the request of States, electoral assistance in the broadest sense. This evidently includes not only electoral monitoring, but also capacity-building at the institutional level, and it will often require long-term efforts. At present the United Nations, for lack of resources, cannot comply with many of the requests put to it. We wish to see the capacities of the Secretariat substantially strengthened in this respect. The task also encompasses more conceptual work and exchange with other actors in this area.

To reduce democratization to the holding of elections has variably been termed the "fallacy of electoralism" or the "free elections trap". Democracy is not an "on-off" event, and elections by themselves do not constitute democracy. Elections which take place without some essential institutional underpinnings, without a functioning judiciary system, without the rule of law, run the risk of discrediting the very concept of democracy. This is where we see another important task for the United Nations: to give expert advice to Governments regarding the complex, multifold tasks that many of them face in connection with a democratic transition.

Two years ago, my Government created a programme to aid democratization processes and to promote the respect for human rights and the rule of law. A further component of this programme is financial or staff support for election observation missions. In the context of its cooperation programmes, the German Government has supported a number of long-term projects to strengthen an environment which is conducive to democratization. Lasting contributions towards democratization in a number of countries have been effected through German political foundations. Those projects have addressed a large spectrum of participants, issues and institutions. They have, on a number of occasions, been termed crucial to the success of a democratic transition by the countries themselves.

Given our history, my country thinks it has a special appreciation of the problems and challenges facing the new and restored democracies, and we would like to state

that we want to continue to cooperate closely with those States.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of my delegation on the agenda item under review.

The Kingdom of Swaziland welcomes the Secretary-General's report in document A/52/513, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". The report addresses, among other issues, a new understanding of democratization; the role of civil society and the private sector in democratization; gender, participation and democratization; and recent international events regarding democratization and governance.

We have carefully studied the report and identified the above as the core issues that deserve the total and undivided attention of the United Nations — all the more because of the dynamic nature of the society in which we live today. Based, therefore, on the four critical issues I have referred to, my delegation is alive to the fact that a periodic assessment of the ways and means with which we achieve and practice democracy is an essential tool towards peace-building and sustainable development. This is significant to developing nations such as the Kingdom of Swaziland, which, though they have been independent for a while, still require some assistance to maintain the tempo of their quest for democratization and good governance.

In its resolutions 50/133 of 1995 and 51/31 of 1996, the General Assembly mandated the Secretary-General to continue to improve the capacity of the Organization to respond effectively to the requests of Member States in their efforts to achieve the goal of democratization. Acting on that mandate, the United Nations has been actively involved in the movement of new or restored democracies, and has, as a result, convened a number of regional conferences which brought together a diverse range of interested parties. Notable among these conference are the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, held in Bucharest in September 1997, and the International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity, organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and held in New York in July 1997. Both these conferences marked the start of a new way of thinking about international cooperation in the sphere of governance and democratization. And from them emerged two key principles of considerable importance: a reaffirmation that international assistance for

democratization and reform needs to be tailored to fit into the broader political, cultural and social circumstances of each country, and that good governance is effective, participatory, transparent, accountable and equitable, and promotes the rule of law.

My delegation is pleased to further note from the Secretary-General's report that the United Nations is committed to its role as the key player in the field of democratization and governance. We are heartened by the Organization's recognition of the fact that in assisting and supporting the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, and democratization in general, the Organization does not in any way endorse or promote any specific form of democracy. In keeping with this view, the Kingdom of Swaziland believes that democracy is not a model to be copied but a goal to be attained, and the pace at which it can proceed is dependent on a variety of political, economic, social and cultural factors proper to the circumstances of a particular culture and society. Hence the Kingdom's belief in analysing its own socio-economic and political system with a view to constructing a vision for the future based on our own beliefs and philosophy, one which reflects the deepest aspirations of the people of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

This is the blueprint we have laid down for ourselves as a country, and it is one that we are committed to pursue at all costs and with vigour if we are to achieve sustainable development and respond effectively to the demands of the next millennium. Addressing the fifty-second session of the General Assembly in September this year, His Majesty King Mswati III mentioned in his statement that for us to achieve sustainable growth and development, we need the understanding and support of the international community in our efforts to address both short and long-term social and political challenges. In order to meet these challenges, we realize that we need to create an environment in which our people can prosper. It is for this reason that His Majesty called for the review of the nation's Constitution based on the views and aspirations of the Swazi nation. In essence, His Majesty is anxious to see the inclusion of the entire Swazi populace in this process. This, in our view, constitutes the best course of action. We need a political dispensation that emerges from the grass roots, and not one "dumped" by external forces.

Our unique home-grown political system embraces the key variables and characteristics of democracy.

Election through the secret ballot, direct representation, transparency and accountability to the electorate are some of the built-in safety valves the system is proud of. Like all political systems, however, ours has had its shortcomings. The initiative by His Majesty, in direct consultation with the entire Swazi nation, to strengthen our Constitution is but one of the initiatives that we consider a desirable answer to the differences we might have as a nation.

Every country in the world is today seeking a winning formula for economic growth, social advancement and development. In effect, we have realized that we need to have a clear-cut policy on economic and social development. The private sector as a development partner has a crucial role to play in the consolidation of democracy and the promotion of sustainable human development. It has the ability to distribute economic resources, increase economic efficiency and provide employment, thus improving the population's standard of living. The Government, on the other hand, has the responsibility to create an enabling environment in order to allow the private sector to become the engine for growth. One of the basic realities is that if we are to survive economically as a nation, we must do everything in our power to facilitate the healthy growth of the private sector. The standards we have set for ourselves in this regard give us good reason to be optimistic about the future.

In concluding my statement, allow me to state that, for the Kingdom of Swaziland, democracy denotes the participation of the people in Government. In a nutshell, it denotes a process by which a policy of increasing the involvement of the people in their own Government is implemented. This process entails the putting in place of appropriate structures to facilitate the increased involvement of the people in Government. Our system and philosophy seek to achieve exactly this participation in Government. To this end, the system of Government encourages people to form structures at the local and regional levels in order to articulate their wishes and aspirations. With this understanding, we have been able to prosper and remain the peaceful country which, over the years, we have grown and have been known to be. We look to the United Nations to assist us in our endeavour to strengthen our rich heritage — one that we aspire to pass on to many generations to come.

I would observe off the cuff that it saddens me, as a son of Africa, that today we are talking of democracies. We in Africa appeal to our friends to appreciate our efforts. We know our problems; we know what we want to achieve. All we need and want is for the international

community to support our efforts. The bad history that is associated with us in Africa in particular has never been of our own design, but is an accident of history that befell the continent of Africa.

Africa today suffers marginalization and experiences the skirmishes of wars that are fought with weapons never before known to the continent. The question therefore becomes: Can the international community assist Africa by applying a dead stop to the trafficking of the arms of war to our continent? Our economies are today regarded as grappling with problems. For all this, it is not we who are to blame, but the accident of history. As a student of history myself, I am saddened when I think of how our forefathers, brothers and sisters were pulled out of the continent of Africa and planted in the regions of the world where even almighty God had never designed them to be.

My appeal, therefore, is for understanding. The problems that we have — political and economic — were imposed on us. I shudder to say that even the so-called wind of democracy may soon bear some conditionalities and consequences for Africa. I am reminded of an era when multipartism became popular in Africa and we emulated systems from certain quarters of the world that subsequently dehumanized us.

On the quest for democracy, we are saying: Let the international community appreciate our cultural values. For democracy that is devoid of the reflections of our values will remain foreign to Africa and, indeed, to all the developing nations.

With these sad remarks, forgive me: I now feel like bursting into tears because of the ugly history with which Africa has been associated.

Mr. Erdős (Hungary) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation associates itself with the statement made on this agenda item by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

The unprecedented changes that have radically altered the world's political landscape have opened the door to the establishment of the rule of law and to democratic development in an increasing number of countries throughout the world. Accordingly, new or restored democracies are characterized by a wide range of situations.

The region of Central and Eastern Europe, in which my country is located, has played a special role in the great changes that we are all witnessing. I would recall that the epicentre of cold-war ideological and military confrontation was located precisely in Central and Eastern Europe. In this context, I note that my country is proud of the significant role it played in the events that led to the dismantling of the political and psychological iron curtain that divided the two parts of Europe for so long.

In recent years, the profound changes on the international scene in Europe and elsewhere have made the worldwide process of democratization irresistible. This process is, however, far from complete. We must continue to strive tirelessly to promote democratization and to consolidate democratic institutions where they already exist. We must recognize without complacency that many challenges remain to be addressed throughout the world, such as the persistence of oppression and the overt or more subtle attempts to distort democracy. It is precisely because the young democracies in some parts of the world are so fragile that the international community must continue to help them to confront the dangers awaiting them, within and without.

In our era of globalization, we must bear in mind that national objectives can be achieved only if democracy, political stability and well-being are established and strengthened not only at home, but among one's neighbours as well. In this context, the proper functioning of democratic institutions, the positive performance of a market economy and the conduct of an open and rational foreign policy are essential if the multifarious problems arising within our societies and among our States are to be successfully addressed.

The depth and intensity of the process of democratization cannot, of course, be identical in all the countries where this process is under way. This shows the great variety of conditions in which this qualitatively new international situation is coming about. But in any event the great surge towards democracy in each of the countries concerned must reflect the universal values that are the basis of democracy and must reflect the will of the people — of which Governments, we must always remember, are merely the expression.

Even though, for political and historical reasons harking back to another era, democracy does not appear as a point of reference in the Charter, it is, as the report of the Secretary-General notes, more essential than ever to United Nations activities. Today's goal is to integrate

democracy into the activities of the United Nations in various fields. We therefore welcome the readiness of the world Organization to give practical assistance to Governments in establishing States based on the rule of law.

Hungary is among the sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.28, which was introduced this morning by the representative of Romania. This is because we agree with its political message and because we are aware that, with the end of the bipolar world, it is important for us to ensure that democratic governance is given the importance it deserves. We note, however, that the text of the draft resolution would benefit from editorial improvements in both the preambular and operative parts, to avoid redundancies and awkward diction.

The process that began almost 10 years ago brought together this year at Bucharest, the capital of Romania — which, I should note, was an ideal and meaningful venue for such deliberations — many countries that have joined the great family of democratic nations. We expect not only that this process will continue, but that the number of participants in this great enterprise of building democratic societies will continue to grow.

Mr. Paguaga Fernández (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am speaking on behalf of the following countries of Central America: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama and Nicaragua.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report, contained in document A/52/513, submitted in accordance with resolution 51/31 of 6 December 1996. The report describes recent international events on democratization and governance, including the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development and the International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity, as well as the activities of the United Nations and the Organization's suggestions and recommendations to strengthen and promote the worldwide process of democratization. These are substantive contributions that Governments should bear in mind when they formulate and implement their national policies.

For decades, and especially since the Second World War, international relations were subject to clashing, divisive and antagonistic forces. But since the fall of the Berlin Wall a short time ago, we have seen how the ideological confrontation of the two super-Powers, which dragged the majority of countries into one or the other

sphere of influence, has — in spite of many difficulties, in particular the economic difficulties of the developing countries — given way to acceptance of the democratic ideal. A global effort is now under way to establish, strengthen and consolidate democracy.

Democratization, in short, is a worldwide movement that involves North and South, East and West. Far from being an abstract concept, democracy is — along with its inseparable ethical values — incompatible with the illusions that come about as a result of outdated rhetoric and discredited utopias. We who have freed ourselves for all time from totalitarianism and all other forms of hegemony have learned that democracy is the best model for guaranteeing a framework of freedoms that provides lasting and sustainable solutions to the economic, political and social problems that beset our societies.

Since the beginning of this decade, the process of strengthening and consolidating democracy has stood out in the Central American region, where after many years of internal conflict in several countries and of dictatorial Governments or military regimes, our societies now participate in the democratic way of life and in its inherent political pluralism, with the holding of periodic elections providing: transfer of power in keeping with the will of the people; open dialogue with civil society; recognition and protection of fundamental human rights including freedom of association and of expression; separation of powers, ensuring in particular an independent judiciary and the subjection of military to civil authorities; and accountability of leaders to their people for their actions.

In short, the sun of democracy is shining daily throughout Central America. Civilized dialogue has replaced war; what used to be achieved with bayonets and machine guns is now being achieved through elections and constitutional mechanisms; where despots once ruled, we now have the rule of law. As one of the great teachings of Simón Bolívar, the Liberator, tells us,

“Nothing is as dangerous as leaving the same citizen in power for a long time. The people grow accustomed to obeying him, and he grows accustomed to giving them orders, which leads to usurpation and tyranny.”

The democratic process should be not only political, but economic, social and cultural as well. It should be a process with open participation and should include controls to prevent arbitrary rule based on constant abuse of power. It must have mechanisms that ensure its validity in the

social, economic and cultural spheres so that democracy is not a static model but a dynamic, constantly changing system always open to improvement.

There is no single definition of democracy that can identify its many and varied complex aspects and features; each people must organize itself and structure its political activities in keeping with its own characteristics, culture, customs and traditions. Nonetheless, we believe that the points we have mentioned are essential if a Government is to act transparently, legally and effectively, thus avoiding corruption.

Unfortunately, in our world there remain conflicts, violence, ethnic strife, religious intolerance, terrorism, drug trafficking, corruption, poverty, unjust international economic relations and a heavy external debt that continues to prove overwhelming. We still have an acute shortage of resources and ongoing environmental deterioration, scourges that jeopardize world peace and security and, by extension, the process of democratization.

Thus, new democracies must look to the future and face the new challenges arising; they must act steadily and persistently within our own countries, and cooperatively in international relations. This framework of international cooperation and recommendations within our societies has been taking shape in the three International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies. The first Conference was held in Manila, the Philippines; the second in Central America, in Managua, Nicaragua; and the third from 2 to 4 September 1997 in Bucharest, Romania, where the heroic events of December 1989 took place.

The progress review and recommendations of the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development has been circulated by the Secretariat in document A/52/334. That document is a programme of action for cooperation for new and restored democracies, in which we reaffirm commitment to the process of democratization in our societies, while recognizing the relationship of mutual support and interdependence between democracy, sustainable development and good governance.

Among the issues of greatest importance are those of determining new ways of consolidating democracy, eliminating the scourge of poverty, allocating more resources to the judiciary so as to ensure its independence

and effectiveness and absorbing the social cost of adapting new structures.

The ongoing improvement of our democratic institutions strengthens governance and fosters transparency and the full participation of civil society in the democratic process, together with economic growth and ongoing social equity. To this end, the Bucharest document has recommended the establishment of a follow-up mechanism or a secretariat. This follow-up would provide information on country programmes and on ways in which specific issues are addressed and would facilitate communications and understanding in new or restored democracies, as well as their cooperation with traditional democracies and national and international organizations, so as to enhance the outcome of programmes and to foster cooperation. The mechanism established should be impartial, transparent and economical. Until such a follow-up mechanism is established, the Chairman of the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies will carry out this function in cooperation with participating countries. Meanwhile, we hope that this Assembly will adopt by consensus draft resolution A/52/L.28, which was introduced by the delegation of Romania and sponsored by our participating countries and other friendly countries.

For Central America, democracy, with the flaws and imperfections that characterize any human endeavour, is the best form of government that humankind has invented to date. We must therefore give it our constant support so that it will not falter in any country of the world. We should bear in mind this quotation from the first paragraph of chapter 58 of the second part of *Don Quixote de la Mancha*:

"Freedom, Sancho, is one of the most prefollicious gifts that the heavens have granted man; it cannot be equalled, even by all the treasures of land and sea; for liberty and for honour, one can and must risk one's life; and, on the contrary, captivity is the greatest evil that can happen to man."

If this quotation from Miguel de Cervantes is valid for individuals, it is even more so for all nations of the world. Respect for the dignity and inviolability of the human being, from the very moment of its conception, is the fundamental principle of democracy, and when we speak of freedom, we are thinking of it not just as a political concept; we are thinking of it, above all, in its social dimension.

Central America is moving optimistically forward along the broad avenues of peace, democracy and social justice, faithfully and persistently, towards the long-desired goals of sustainable development.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): The coming year, 1998, is of particular significance to my country. It will commemorate the centennial of the founding of the Philippine Republic. The year will also mark the tenth anniversary of the formation of the International Conference of Newly Restored Democracies, held in Manila in 1988.

In 1986, the Filipino people arose as one to peacefully overthrow a dictatorial regime and to effect the return of democracy. After the restoration of its democratic institutions, the Philippines experienced a marked improvement in its economy, making it a favoured investment destination and a new "Asian miracle". Despite the recent currency problems my country has suffered, along with our South-East Asian neighbours, the Philippine economy remains robust and is successfully weathering this momentary difficulty.

The spirit of the "Peoples' Power" revolution was to sweep the world in the 1980s and 1990s. We were elated and proud to see the restoration or nascence of democracy in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. This revolutionary whirlwind took the world by surprise and has altered the contours of the geopolitical landscape.

In order to consolidate these gains, the Philippines and a handful of countries with like experiences convened the first International Conference of Newly Restored Democracies in 1988 and issued the Manila Declaration, which identified the indissoluble link between democracy, peace and development and called for mutual support among both new and old democracies particularly to safeguard the gains won by the newly restored democratic regimes against both internal and external threats.

The next Conference, hosted by Nicaragua in 1994, produced the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action, which sought to promote respect for democratic principles, to foster the dissemination of, and to arrive at, a broader understanding of democracy and to encourage greater cooperation and coordination among democracies, the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions. The name of the Conference was broadened to International Conference of New or Restored

Democracies to encompass the States which became democratic for the first time in their respective histories.

I wish to take this opportunity to express the most heartfelt thanks of the Philippines to the people and the Government of Romania for making the Third Conference, held in September in Bucharest, a resounding success. We also wish to express our gratitude to the United Nations Development Programme for its invaluable support, in both moral and material terms. I would also like to thank the Governments of the Netherlands, Switzerland, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Germany and Canada and the Agency for the French-Speaking Community for their assistance.

The Bucharest Conference built upon the previous two conferences in injecting the participation of civil society. Academicians and leaders of non-governmental groups engaged government officials in meaningful and insightful discussions in the Conference's first Civil Society Forum. The Forum came to affirm the invaluable role that civil society plays in the development and maintenance of democracy and in the societal troika which includes government and the private sector as equal partners.

The Conference's "Progress Review and Recommendations" on safeguarding democracy, promoting development and improving governance addresses the international community as a whole, the United Nations, its Member States and international financial organizations. It is our hope that the community has been able to study and give serious thought to these recommendations and views, among them, first, that penal sanctions should be imposed on foreign entities and organizations that attempt to corrupt government officials and institutions; secondly, that gender balance cannot be achieved as long as gender inequality exists, and thus countries should examine the status of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action; and, thirdly, that the evaluation of a country's performance on matters of democracy should be evaluated by the country itself, and not by other entities.

It is also gratifying to note the growing membership of the Conference from all regions. It has been decided that the next Conference will be held in Africa, thus making the round of regional representation complete. The Government of Benin has graciously offered to play host to the Conference.

The draft resolution before us and the report of the Secretary-General are direct results of the call for an

enhanced and meaningful working relationship between the Conference and the United Nations system — the Secretariat, agencies and Member States. We are particularly grateful to the Secretary-General, and to his predecessor, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for their support for the aims and aspirations of the Conference through concrete actions and programmes, as well as through their recommendations, in the areas of electoral assistance, the strengthening of civil society and the coordination of United Nations activities in democratization and governance.

The movement of new or restored democracies is a growing force in the world today. I believe it is time that we members of the Conference began to assert the strength of our numbers and potential influence and aired our collective opinions on the vital issues of the day, such as in the realm of global peace and security, environmental protection and conservation, sustainable development, human rights and overall economic and social development.

In recognition of our growing numbers, may I reiterate the call made by my Foreign Secretary, Mr. Domingo Siazon, for us to consider the convening of a summit of heads of Government of new or restored democracies at the start of the new millennium.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): Mongolia attaches great importance to the consideration by the Assembly of the agenda item entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report on this item, contained in document A/52/513. It also welcomes the outcome of the Bucharest Conference of New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, as well as that of the International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity, organized with the active participation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

We agree with the Secretary-General that the movement of new or restored democracies and its world conferences have given a strong momentum to the process of global and regional democratization. The vast experience of many States in promoting or consolidating democracy provided rich material for the Secretary-General to concentrate, in the fourth report on this subject, on issues of policy and principles. Thus, the Subgroup on Capacity-Building for Governance of the

Administrative Committee on Coordination has defined, in general, 11 concrete principles of good governance, including an effective public sector, accountability/transparency of processes and institutions, effective participation of civil society/political empowerment and gender equality. As a new democracy, Mongolia believes that all these principles are essential in promoting or consolidating democracy.

Mongolia agrees with the conclusion that democracy is not a model to be copied or imposed, but rather a goal to be attained, and that the pace at which democratization can proceed is dependent on a variety of political, economic, social and cultural factors proper to the circumstances of a particular culture or society.

The experience of Mongolia's democratization shows that the latter can be defined as a move away from totalitarianism/authoritarianism to a democratic/participatory form of government and consists largely of two distinct stages: first, a stage of transition which ends when a new Government is installed as a result of free and fair elections and its legitimacy is accepted by all political actors, while the holding of subsequent elections is seen as part of a political process; and, secondly, a stage of democratic consolidation, which can be defined as a process aimed at achieving the long-term sustainability of the democratic process. Democratic consolidation most often faces a constellation of challenges and pressures of a non-normative character, such as socio-economic environment, lack of adequate resources, support, or lack of it, by the population of policy changes introduced, quality of civil society, empowerment of the citizenry, quality of the civil service, rational choices by political actors, integrity of leaders, party systems and, of course, the overall international environment. All these could amount to a painful process that requires time, persistent efforts and willingness to succeed.

The Secretary-General's report rightly points out elections as a vital element or yardstick of democratization. In the past seven years Mongolia has conducted three parliamentary, two presidential and two local elections, all of which have been recognized as free and fair. The degree of maturity of our democratization can be judged by the last two elections, parliamentary and presidential, held in 1996 and 1997 respectively. The parliamentary elections were significant in that they brought to office, in a landslide victory, those political forces that were newly formed in the early 1990s to challenge the dominance of the long-ruling, reformed ex-communist party. The transfer of power was smooth and orderly. The incumbent

President, associated closely with the new democratic forces, lost in fair presidential elections, and again the transfer of power was smooth, orderly and dignified.

For Mongolia, as for most other ex-communist nations, the biggest challenge to democratic consolidation is posed by pressures of a socio-economic nature. As we have learned in the past few years, even simultaneous democratization and economic liberalization can exact high social costs, while economic hardships can weaken trust in the viability of democratic institutions. Therefore, the efforts to reduce economic hardships and poverty, hence social hardships and unrest, need perseverance or political will, adequate resources and international support and assistance. Convinced that the economic reform should be further accelerated so as to shorten the painful economic transition period, the new Government has undertaken in the past year a number of radical measures. Thus it has introduced a "zero" per cent import tariff and accelerated the pace of ongoing privatization. These measures also represent important steps to attract foreign direct investment and expand trade.

Redefining the role of the State constitutes another imperative, as pointed out in the Secretary-General's report. As practice demonstrates, a vibrant civil society and private sector are also critical to the process of democratization and its subsequent consolidation. Though civil society in Mongolia is emerging as an important actor, it has not yet matured as a full-fledged social partner to fully assume responsibilities or shape the terms of the debate on national issues. It is especially weak in rural areas, where political participation is sometimes confined to casting votes in the elections. As to the private sector, it is still in the process of consolidation and needs active legislative and other support of the Parliament and the Government.

As the International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity, held in New York last July, vividly demonstrated, good governance is essential in properly ensuring the interaction of the State, the private sector and civil society. As the report points out, the State creates a conducive political, economic and legal environment, while the private sector generates jobs and income, and civil society facilitates political and social interaction and mobilizes groups to participate in economic, social and political activities.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to UNDP and other organizers of

the Conference for their initiative and efforts that made it a success. Likewise, we believe that the Bucharest Conference was also very useful and productive. The Progress Review and Recommendations adopted at the Conference, as reflected in document A/52/334, are a valuable source of analytical study, while the proposed guidelines for strengthening policies and principles addressed to the Governments of the new and restored democracies are of immense practical importance. We believe that the proposal to develop some indicators to assess or monitor progress in democratization is a timely one that should be pursued. Mongolia is prepared to work together with others on this question.

Mongolia fully supports the convening of such conferences at regular intervals, seeing in them a valuable form of exchange of experience and cooperation. We express our readiness to host one of the forthcoming conferences in Mongolia soon.

As a sponsor of draft resolution A/52/L.28 on this item, introduced this morning by the representative of Romania, my delegation expresses the hope that it will be adopted without a vote.

Ms. Cornette (Guyana): The agenda item we are now considering, "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies", has great significance for my country. Five years ago, in October 1992, Guyana became a newly restored democracy, after the first free and fair elections in decades. On 15 December, five years on, Guyanese will choose the Government that will lead our young democracy into the twenty-first century. At the last count, 10 political parties will be vying for that honour. This is testimony to the commitment of the Government and people of Guyana to democracy. It is from our efforts to secure democracy that we recognize the value of external support for it.

Guyana received invaluable assistance from the United Nations for the electoral process in 1992 and again in 1997. Consequently, Guyana knows first-hand the importance of the subject of our debate here today. On behalf of my Government, I take this opportunity to thank the Organization for the assistance which has been provided to us. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his informative and analytical report on the matter. We were pleased to note the nexus established between democracy and good governance and the importance of these elements for consolidating peace and development.

For fledgling democracies such as ours, the United Nations is the best place to seek support. Since the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which took place in Manila in 1988, the question of democracy has been subject to much debate and action by diverse entities: Governments, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and academia, to mention but a few. The Third International Conference, convened last September in Bucharest, was preceded in July by the International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity, sponsored by the UNDP. Resulting from all of those discussions through the years is a general acceptance that democracy is like culture, a way of life that has to be learned and nurtured for it to survive and flourish. It is subject to the social, political and economic peculiarities of each national environment as much as it is affected by international activities. The support offered by the United Nations system must be designed to deal with these interlocking actualities.

Poverty, the external debt burden, illicit drug-trafficking and intra-State conflicts are among the many threats that confront our efforts to consolidate democracy. These are global issues that require global solutions. This is another reason why support by the United Nations system is important. Further, even as we focus specifically on the promotion and consolidation of democracy, it is obvious that many of the other activities of the United Nations are indirectly components of any support that the United Nations system extends. As the Secretary-General stresses in paragraph 46 of his report [A/52/513],

"That the peace-building and development, democratization and governance efforts of the Organization are distinct but mutually reinforcing underlines the importance for the United Nations system as a whole to improve its ability to cooperate and coordinate its actions."

Accordingly, this creates an important role for the developed democracies in our international community. Assistance from them on a bilateral or, preferably, multilateral basis is almost a sine qua non for the success of new or restored democracies.

In our efforts to guarantee success, it is also important to focus on our youth. It is they who will eventually take up the reins of government. If we really want to promote, consolidate and ultimately preserve

democracy we have to look to the future. A key element of our strategy today, therefore, should be to prepare our leaders of tomorrow. Here again the United Nations can lend crucial support through the dissemination of information and the hosting of programmes and other activities to familiarize youth with the tenets of this important process. Due to the intrinsic value of democracy and good governance and their importance to sustainable development and peace-building, no stone should be left unturned in our efforts to ensure that new or restored democracies remain democratic. Wherever the United Nations system can provide support it must.

The support given by the United Nations system to Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies is unquestionably vital. It helps in providing guidance to the United Nations itself, to Governments, and to all others involved in fortifying democracy locally, regionally and globally. It is therefore necessary for the international community to intensify its efforts to create an international framework of support that is conducive to ultimate success in irrevocably consolidating new or restored democracies at the national level.

Mr. Aouad (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish):
I have the honour to express Argentina's gratitude for the support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

I should like to extend our thanks to the Secretary-General for his very thorough report, and to the Government and people of Romania for the success of the recent Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development. We welcomed the conclusions of the Bucharest Conference, whose debates and recommendations help move us towards a future in which the democratization processes now under way are progressively consolidated.

Nevertheless, I would like to express our concern at the reports of regional experts that there are still severe threats to fragile democracies in specific regions. At the same time, we support the recommendation that the international community provide more assistance in combating those threats.

During 1997 there also took place in New York the International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity, which concluded that good governance is effective, participatory, transparent, accountable and equitable and promotes the rule of law. In this regard, we

welcome the fact that the international community is encouraging consideration and gradual development of a new philosophy of cooperation in this area. Good governance and democratization, sustainable development and the consolidation of peace daily assume greater prominence in international debate.

The Argentine Republic reaffirms today its unswerving commitment to cooperate, through the United Nations system, in all initiatives to promote peace, the expansion of democracy and respect for human rights. It is precisely because of this commitment that we have taken two key initiatives, one in the field of international policy and the other in the realm of cooperation and humanitarian assistance. The first is Argentina's participation in peacekeeping operations within the United Nations collective security system, with 614 of our personnel scattered in various parts of the world. The other initiative is the "White Helmet Commission", launched by the President of Argentina in 1993. Designed to draw on the world's real potential for emergency humanitarian assistance, this is also an appropriate instrument for helping the United Nations in its work of consolidating international peace.

Argentina has returned to the path of democracy, after decades, and in the most diverse forums has maintained its determination to continue deepening the process of consolidating democracy, which it has been doing for 14 years without interruption.

Within our region my country took an active part in drawing up the presidential statement on a commitment to democracy, signed by the Heads of State of the members of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), together with Chile and Bolivia, which established that the full and effective functioning of democratic institutions was an essential condition for cooperation in MERCOSUR.

For all these reasons, my country has also participated actively in the democratization processes in Central America and the Caribbean, providing technical, economic and financial assistance, as well as electoral observers, and has taken part in peacekeeping operations when asked to do so.

My delegation has no doubt whatsoever that the democratic system of government is the best conduit for expression of the people's will. We believe that it is in the framework of democracy that initiatives and opportunities deriving from political and economic

freedom flourish. The modern formula for development rests on these freedoms, but also on States' responsibilities to society as guarantors of fundamental freedoms and the strengthening of the system itself.

The draft resolution comes within an international framework oriented towards promoting democracies and the parliamentary system. As on previous occasions, Argentina is a sponsor, convinced that we are thus contributing to the development of ideals that unite the international community.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): When the United Nations was founded, it inscribed among the purposes set forth in its Charter the maintenance of international peace and security, the development of friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and the promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Since 1945, the world has undergone dramatic changes. We have survived the long years of cold war and ideological confrontation. The world political map has recorded the emergence of new States, most of which have made their choice in favour of democracy.

Today, the process of democratization affects North and South, East and West, on a worldwide scale. In recent years, there has been an almost universal recognition that a democratic system of governance is the best model to ensure a reliable framework for finding solutions to any political, economic and social problems.

Ukraine is not a new Member of the United Nations, but, as a State that regained its independence, it considers itself an inalienable part of the new or restored democracies. Having embarked on the road of democracy from the very first year of its independence, Ukraine has declared its political will to build an open, free and democratic State. In so doing, our country has managed to preserve peace and social accord in its society, to remove contradictions that might have developed into bloody conflicts on ethnic, political and economic grounds and, as a result, to secure national harmony.

Obviously, the adoption of the Fundamental Law of Ukraine on 28 June 1996 promoted the further strengthening of stability in its internal policy and harmony in its society. The new Constitution of Ukraine became a reliable guarantee of the rule of law and democratic principles and of personal rights and freedoms.

Thus the period of national formation, which lasted for six years, is completed. The State framework has been built, and now it should be strengthened and managed properly, first of all in the economic field.

Yet another sign of the further development of democracy in Ukraine has been the recent adoption by the Ukrainian Parliament of the law on its human rights representative or ombudsman. The main purpose of this institution is to establish a parliamentary control over the observance of the constitutional rights and freedoms of all citizens.

I would also like to note that at the present time a delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is paying a visit to Ukraine with the aim of assessing the latest developments in the sphere of local self-governance.

Despite the optimism prevailing in this Hall as to the process of democratization of the world community, it should be noted that there are still considerable potential threats to democracies in different parts of the world. Democratization is a lasting process that requires a careful attitude on the part of both national Governments and international organizations and institutions.

In this regard, the delegation of Ukraine would like to recall the initiative put forward by the President of Ukraine two years ago at the commemorative meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to establish a mechanism of United Nations trusteeship over the processes of formation of new States.

We are of the view that the current United Nations support for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies is in line with that proposal. Our delegation commends the activities of the United Nations Secretary-General and the United Nations Development Programme in supporting and monitoring the efforts of the new or restored democracies, as mandated by the General Assembly, and strongly supports the recommendation of the Bucharest Conference in this regard.

We fully endorse the observations and recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/52/513), in particular those related to United Nations activities in democratization and governance and in strengthening civil society, which outline the new trends in the movement towards democracy.

We believe that the further elaboration of the two concepts of democratization and good governance should be carried out in a unified manner, because those two phenomena are inseparably linked. My delegation hopes that this can be achieved through the proper combination of their agendas within a single framework.

As a participant at the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development held this year at Bucharest, Ukraine endorsed the final document of the Conference, entitled "Progress Review and Recommendations". We regard that document as a significantly important one for further strengthening the policies and principles utilized by the Governments of new or restored democracies.

Our delegation fully shares the idea expressed in the final document of the Conference that:

"United Nations activities should be designed to help meet the special circumstances and priorities of each country and, at the same time, offer guidance for the implementation of the recommendations and plans of action adopted by the major United Nations world conferences." [A/52/334, appendix, part IV.B]

One can say without any exaggeration that the process of democratization as a prevailing trend in the development of world civilization on the threshold of the new millennium will continue to increase in the twenty-first century. The peace, security and prosperity of peoples remain the priority of progressive humanity and the purpose of the United Nations existence.

In conclusion, let me once again confirm Ukraine's adherence to the principles of democracy and its readiness to continue to remain a cooperative partner of the United Nations in supporting the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

Mr. Biaou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to join preceding speakers in extending the congratulations of the delegation of Benin on the efficient manner with which the officers of the General Assembly have been discharging their duties in guiding the work of this session.

As you are aware, Benin has been engaged in for more than seven years the process of democratization and building a State based on the rule of law. Thus, my delegation attaches great importance to agenda item 38, "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of

Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The changes that have taken place on the international stage in recent years have had a decisive impact on the socio-economic evolution of several nations and have altered the political and economic landscape of certain regions.

From Latin America to Africa, from Europe to Asia, several authoritarian Powers, under the pressure of democratic forces, have given way to democratic regimes more open and more respectful of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The process of democratization thus put in motion has gained ground and taken various paths, in keeping with the realities and requirements of each society as well as according to circumstances.

Unfortunately, the advance of democratization has not been uniform everywhere. Here and there, the movement has slowed down and even suffered setbacks in certain areas. In many countries, especially in my continent, Africa, fragile democracies are still under threat. There is every reason to believe that democratization now needs to find its second wind.

Against this background, there is a pressing need for new or restored democracies to act together in seeking ways and means to consolidate and build on what they have achieved. In this undertaking, the United Nations has an important role to play.

My delegation hopes that the current debate will allow us to identify ways and means by which the Organization will be able to provide more effective support in the areas of democratization and good management of public affairs.

Democracy cannot be consolidated as a system of government without harmonious socio-economic development that fosters the development of human beings in their various dimensions. My delegation therefore welcomes the General Assembly's adoption this year of the Agenda for Development, which adequately emphasizes complementarity and the complexity of the relationships between democracy and development.

Furthermore, this new dimension of international cooperation has been at the heart of the work of the Third International Conference of New or Restored

Democracies on Democracy and Development, which has held from 2 to 4 September 1997 in Bucharest, Romania. Benin took an active part in that Conference and would very much like to see its decisions and recommendations contribute, in the context of the current reforms, to defining within United Nations a better way of supporting the efforts of Governments to foster and consolidate new or restored democracies.

In fact, we are aware and convinced that merely meeting the requirements of the ritual of holding periodic elections is not enough and can in no way be considered decisive in establishing and guaranteeing lasting democracy in a country, particularly in a developing country such as my own, which is classified among the least developed.

Likewise, for democracy to have real meaning — for it to be an ideal shared by all peoples and for it to fully achieve its liberating and saving effects — it must be unambiguously expressed both at the national and the international levels. This means that democracy must also underlie and govern the organization and conduct of international relations. Now that the cold war is over and the Berlin Wall has fallen, the world, so long divided by East-West antagonism and by North-South imbalances, can and must develop and implement new, democratic relations among States.

It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the renewal of the United Nations, which began with the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of our universal Organization, must be supported by all our States and resolutely carried out in order to ensure the necessary conditions for the international community's harmonious pursuit of the democratization process at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Following the peaceful changes that took place in Benin after the National Conference of Active Forces of the Nation in February 1990, the people of Benin have been experiencing an era of democratic renewal based, *inter alia*, on the building of the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development through its three component factors — economic, social and environmental. This new experiment is developing and taking root as time passes and events unfold.

In order to signal its deep-seated commitment to promoting the principles of democracy, the Government of Benin has offered to host the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies at Cotonou.

Benin will thus be the first country in Africa to host this new type of international conference.

My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the participants in the Third International Conference for their support for our offer, and to assure them that Benin will spare no effort to make the Conference a resounding success that will be inscribed in history and in memory. In order to achieve this noble ambition, Benin knows that it can count on the support of all States and the United Nations system, and in particular on the United Nations Development Programme.

Finally, my delegation fully associates itself with draft resolution A/52/L.28, introduced by Romania on behalf of the sponsors, and sincerely hopes that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra): The day before yesterday, I spoke in the Third Committee to convey a message with regard to the current debate on democracy and human rights versus economic and social rights, and it is fitting to restate that message today. Indeed, in our understanding, it is one of the goals of the United Nations to help Governments promote and consolidate new or restored democracies by using the means, procedures and ideas that political scientists such as Juan Linz of Yale University, for example, and other scholars have identified as democracy-consolidators, and especially by creating a network of support.

Andorra salutes all the efforts compiled in today's draft resolution as worthwhile and as being at the core of the objectives of the Organization, and applauds the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/513. We also wish to express our satisfaction at the success of the three International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies that have taken place since 1988, most recently in Bucharest.

We believe, though, that in order to create the right frame of mind for effective and sustained action in the promotion of democracy around the world, the basis and the importance of democracy must be acknowledged unequivocally by the Organization. And, by fostering in the Organization a somewhat philosophical debate on the nature and necessity of democracy — independent of economic advancement and development — we will be able to catch the attention of civil society and enlist its help in the arduous but uplifting task of expanding the reaches of democracy and human rights in the world.

(spoke in French)

"It is evident to all alike that a great democratic revolution is going on among us, but all do not look at it in the same light. To some it appears to be novel but accidental, and, as such, they hope it may still be checked; to others it seems irresistible, because it is the most uniform, the most ancient, and the most permanent tendency that is to be found in history." [Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Introduction]

(spoke in English)

Alexis de Tocqueville, more than 160 years ago, recognized the emergence and expansion of democracy — both as an idea and as a fact — and tried to chart its pattern of growth, as well as some of its philosophical limits. I am among those who believe that democracy and the establishment of a human rights regime at the planetary level are both irresistible and irrepressible, and that the limits are constituted only by the limits of personal liberty itself — that is, when our liberty infringes upon the liberty of our fellow human beings — for, after all, we are all social beings.

Of course, the fact that I am an Andorran is not unrelated to my core of beliefs. After all, I belong to a society that, with its small size and in its own historical way, has been able to cling to individual liberties and the tenets of tolerance for over 1,000 years. For example, I was recently reading about the times of the Inquisition and witch hunts in Europe, and I realized how benign its attenuated effects were on Andorra.

Why should we hold these commitments to democracy and human rights so firmly? The theory I hold is not one of national pride and glorious illumination — not at all. Our human beings are no better or no worse in essence than any of our fellows in the human family. We were just blessed, it seems to me, with a small territory to administer ourselves that is very isolated by its mountains and its snow from the rest of the world. With everybody knowing everybody else, inflicting harsh treatment on neighbours was a much more difficult task. Indeed, it is much easier to torture and kill on paper than it is in person, except for those who relish sadism and evil.

At the same time, living conditions were so difficult in Andorra that no one could be spared: the collective good was achieved by the cooperation of all and for all, and the collective good was translated into individual benefits of all

kinds that could not be achieved by one person or one family alone. Thus, since 1419 we have had a Parliament and never a one-man or one-party rule. What is most astonishing is that, despite a small society and a strong set of cultural, religious and social values, the liberties of others are and have been so well respected in my country. Our history in the twentieth century is proof of that, our country having been a shelter of freedom for so many individuals fleeing intolerance, torture, totalitarianism and squalid death in the Spanish Civil War, which took place next door to us, and others escaping the barbarities of the Second World War through our northern border.

By taking the Andorran example as a model, I am doing my job as an ambassador, of course — as I did the other day in the Third Committee — which is to expand knowledge about my country, and I beg the Assembly's leniency for taking some time to do that here. But in the end, I will also show that, to a certain extent, it is possible to achieve human rights and democracy in poor countries, in remote communities, out of the mainstream of urban sophistication or New York debating societies. We Andorrans did it out of necessity. We held to those values that were necessary for our survival, but in the end it was a choice by society through democratic means, means that, I acknowledge, were easier and more natural to use in a primitive setting because of the size of the country.

At the end of the second millennium, democracy and human rights are also becoming more of a necessity to the planet. The 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, as the first preambular paragraph of today's draft resolution highlights, charted a course that could lead the world away from the path of self-annihilation the human family is sometimes tempted to take. If we respect the rights of others at the individual level, it is much less likely that we will become aggressive at the conglomerate level of the nation-State. Political scientists argue that democracies, the depositories of realistic respect for human rights, do not fight democracies. The choice of democracy and human rights, a choice of human philosophy that is the only option for a sane world in the centuries to come, has been up for grabs since 1948. We have indeed, for the first time in history, a written international standard of what is good and what is bad. The eternal human search for the implications of good and evil will probably never end, but the 1948 Declaration is a definite step in the right direction. In the name of my Government, I urge many countries to take that step, in full and with no restrictions and no qualifiers.

It is indeed the right moment to reflect upon this question. The fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration is fast approaching, and it could not hurt if some countries were to put their house in order so that we could have a proper celebration in all parts of the world. It is sometimes chilling to listen to the reports that come from certain regions of the world in terms of respect for democracy and human rights. By our vote and co-sponsorship of certain resolutions in the Third Committee, Andorra has made its position clear on this point. The argument that economic and social rights come before individual liberties is a fallacy: why should one exclude the other? After all, countries — even in the developing world — that have embraced democracy and human rights do not seem to be doing worse in terms of development than those that opt for authoritarian regimes.

In any case, since in many of those States human rights and democracy have not had a try, this remains an argument without possible demonstration. Countries such as mine that style themselves as defenders of democracy and human rights must also go beyond the status quo. We must foster tolerance at every level, giving a voice to those who do not have one yet and fostering respect for all members of society.

It is particularly important that we bring knowledge about democracy and human rights into the schools so that our children grow up with solid notions of what is right, of how precious every expression of human individuality is, of how much better a society is that, while tough with intolerant people, achieves strength through reciprocal individual respect and not through repression — through ballots and not through bullets. This is probably one of the most important points necessary for the consolidation of democracy and human rights everywhere: that our children be taught about them. Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child insists on education in matters of human rights, and much is still left to be done in this area. Andorra is devoting particular attention to this subject so that Andorran schools can instil the values of the 1948 Declaration into its students.

As I stated in the Third Committee, the moment is now, and the message is dual. To those countries that fear human rights and democracy, fear not. There is no other way towards progress in the human condition in the years to come, independently of the economy. To those countries that hold democracy and human rights dear, we must go beyond what we have; we must dare to build better societies for all.

Mr. Baby (India): It is a particular pleasure for me, for reasons that I will explain, to speak to the Assembly on the agenda item entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". That I should be the Indian representative speaking on this item illustrates the value of democracy as a system of governance, and of the unique diversity and strength of Indian democracy in particular.

I am a member of the Communist Party of India — Marxist. Giving the lie to the canard that communism as an ideology is opposed to democracy, my party functions within the democratic setup of India. We fight elections, and, as can be seen, we win them. My party is in office in the states of Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura — communists elected to power by the people. We are not in power in New Delhi, though my party is part of the ruling United Front at the centre. It is an indication of the maturity of Indian democracy that I was one of the Members of Parliament invited by the Government of India to represent it at this fifty-second session of the General Assembly. I am honoured to do so.

As the world's largest democracy, India supports the United Nations efforts to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies. We traditionally have had close relations with many of those countries. We have participated in the International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies, including the latest, held in Bucharest in September. The message from Bucharest was that democracy, development and good governance were linked, and that these States and those that support them must focus on all three. We have read with interest the Secretary-General's report (A/52/513) on the support which is being given by the United Nations system.

The new or restored democracies have embarked upon this crucial and essential journey towards representative government at a time when most of them are simultaneously faced not only with the struggle for development but with two other inescapable challenges as well. Domestically, there is pressure, and perhaps also a need, for most States to move towards a market economy, where the State is not the provider of goods and services but a facilitator. Internationally, there is the challenge of globalization. As the 1997 *Report on the World Social Situation* notes,

"transnational forces that propel global changes ... are weakening the ability of national Governments to influence economic and social outcomes, often

putting fulfilment of even the national political commitments, not to mention the ability to influence global trends, beyond the reach of elected national representatives". [E/1997/15, p. 2, para. 8]

While the market economy has been elevated to a norm almost as widely accepted as democracy, the World Bank, in its *World Development Report 1997*, notes that many countries lack the basic institutional foundations for market development. At the same time, making the hard political choices that are essential in the transition to a market economy are that much more difficult in a democracy. The unemployed do not vote for governments that cannot give them jobs or which have laid them off; the task of educating the electorate can be almost insuperable for governments of an inexperienced democracy.

The United Nations can help not only in building national capacities but in pooling experiences from other democracies which have trod this path before. In India, for instance, we have adopted a framework to pursue, through decisions democratically taken, growth with social equity. We call this a market-plus policy. We would be glad to share our experience with others.

What complicates life for the new or restored democracies is that current political orthodoxy calls for the downsizing of the State. Governments, including in the States we are discussing, are being urged to divest themselves of many activities which have been the preserve of the State. However, this too has political consequences, and, in fact, if the World Bank's figures are to be believed, developing countries, where approximately a quarter of national income comes from State spending, still have some way to go before catching up with the levels of government spending in the developed world, where this accounts for almost half of total income. The United Nations system should not cater to the fashionable in its advice; it should analyse each country's situation objectively, and offer neutral, professional advice.

The United Nations system must address the needs which the new or restored democracies have identified very clearly. The Secretary-General's report, which is thought-provoking and innovative, acknowledges that the relationship between democratization, good governance and development is complex. In its work, the United Nations system must assess the specific needs of individual States or groups of States among the new or restored democracies and tailor its programmes accordingly. For instance, there are groups of countries where State capacity has to be built up. There are others where, on the contrary, State capacity

is perhaps overdeveloped and now has to be put to different uses, to "steering rather than rowing". In a third group, State capacity is low, but nevertheless is not being used in the most productive manner. A single paradigm of assistance for capacity-building will not help.

Another major issue which all democracies must face, and which poses particular challenges to new or restored democracies, is the balance between decentralization or devolution on the one hand and central control on the other. In India, for instance, through a continual process of trial and experimentation, we have arrived at a system that works, but which is evolving. The People's Plan movement in my state is a unique experiment where, through Panchayat Raj, people at the grass-roots level are directly involved in planning and implementation. Another example is the community development society model in my state. Clearly, power has to be taken to the people. However, failure to take note of the specific characteristics and historical stage of a particular country or a region within a country while working on devolution and decentralization can upset national consensus in a new or restored democracy. Unequal growth among regions of a country, the devolution of responsibilities to a local government not yet equipped to take them on, or tensions between local governments encouraged by outside advice to take intransigent stands against the central Government, can all disrupt a burgeoning democracy. In extreme cases, these can lead to threats to the integrity and unity of a State. The advice of the United Nations system must not be driven by ideological bias, but must be objective, sensible, and responsive to the needs of each country.

Efforts to experiment with introducing new forms of democratic process to provide people with a choice of their elected representatives at the municipal or local level in certain countries deserve our notice and appreciation, if we are sincere about recognizing different historical traditions in the evolution of democratic political practice.

The role of civil society is of course increasingly important. Its impact on economic, social and even political developments will only increase. However, civil society is, and must be seen to be, a partner with Government in the promotion of a common objective. Again, it has become fashionable of late to project civil society as a watchdog that is adversarial to a democratic Government. This extrapolates the work of a few non-governmental organizations, which have played this role in specific sectors and in individual countries, to a global

norm. This is undesirable. In its work with new or restored democracies, the United Nations should not encourage this polarization, which could destroy the often fragile political consensus on which these States are based.

Although we are primarily addressing the work of the United Nations system, we have to bear in mind that, as the Bucharest Conference recognized, the international community has a vital role to play in support of new or restored democracies. Better terms of trade, enhanced access to markets, increased and stable investment flows, access to technology on a non-discriminatory basis and the availability of increased overseas development assistance are all essential if these countries are to satisfy the needs of economic and social development. If these needs are not met, development in these countries will falter, the social fabric will come under strain, and the populations will become disaffected. There will be reminders that the old systems offered a social blanket: as development is indeed the other face of democracy, why is that other face still veiled? Eventually, the value of democracy might itself be called into question. The world of mature democracies, therefore, has an abiding interest in seeing that the democratic experiment succeeds in the new or restored democracies.

The United Nations has many priorities, but assistance to the new or restored democracies should rank high among them. Unfortunately, its resources are limited, falling and now increasingly uncertain. What is most unfortunate is that the United Nations has been brought to this pass because the legislature of a major contributor, which is also a major democracy, chooses to ignore the Charter requirement that all Member States must pay their assessed contributions to the United Nations unconditionally. The Secretariat might very well long for new or renewed totalitarianism if democratic processes are given as an excuse for a State's refusal to pay its dues. We hope that this incongruous aberration will pass, and that the United Nations will be given, by all its Members, the resources it needs to discharge the many urgent mandates of the international community, including those of the new or restored democracies.

India will be glad to put at the disposal of the United Nations, for the benefit of the new or restored democracies, the experience and expertise it has built up over the last 50 years in the challenge of meeting the economic and social aspirations of a population through a democratic process. We wish our friends in these countries success in the challenging tasks they have set themselves.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): Allow me first of all to say how glad I am today to be addressing the General Assembly with you, Ambassador Camara, in the Chair. You are a distinguished, able and genuine daughter of a great continent: Africa.

In fully associating myself with the comments made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, I would like also to emphasize some issues to which Italy attaches special importance.

The term "democratization" denotes the process by which a society becomes increasingly participatory. The United Nations system can help Member States in this process by aiding them in developing more equitable and effective governance of their peoples and in strengthening their civil society. The Organization may help them through its activities in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building. In fact, as we all know, the majority of conflicts in which the United Nations deploys peace activities are internal ones. The United Nations is increasingly asked to initiate programmes that promote a democratic culture to help negotiate and implement the settlement of conflicts, with subsequent efforts to assist those affected countries in rebuilding their institutions and in consolidating peace.

To achieve the goal of making democracy a universal tool, five main areas, I believe, should be underlined. The first is, political parties, movements and civil society, which are indeed all essential elements to any healthy democracy. Furthermore, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and other associations can also be major forces in the move to democracy.

The second area is that of electoral assistance. In recent years the international community, as the Secretary-General pointed out in a recent letter to Member States, has had greater recourse to United Nations support in this crucial area. Italy has made an active contribution — in Africa, Central America and Europe — to programmes for electoral assistance, the strengthening of civil society, human rights education and training, drafting of electoral laws and voter registration and verification.

The third area is that of media environment. Freedom and pluralism are prerequisites of democracy, and the development of a free and responsible press is indeed essential to effective democratization. In this regard, it is very encouraging to see how close the relationship between the United Nations and the media is

becoming. As members of the Assembly know, the second World Television Forum, established by General Assembly resolution 51/205, has just concluded, with even larger participation than last year, especially from countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The fourth area is respect for human rights, which is the foundation of democracy. In this respect, we praise the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which, in our opinion, should be able to increase its activities and be further encouraged to establish concrete cooperation programmes with Member States. As my Foreign Minister said yesterday at the World Television Forum:

"We are indeed lucky that States have no right any longer to inflict harm on their own citizens."

Fifthly, institution-building and governance is another area where Member States have begun to look to the United Nations for assistance. Specific attention should be paid to strengthening public administration and making it more accountable and transparent. At its meeting on this subject at its resumed fiftieth session, in April 1996, the General Assembly addressed the following key concerns: political legitimacy; freedom of association and participation; a fair and reliable judiciary; freedom of information and expression; effective and efficient public sector management; and interaction with organizations of civil society. In this regard, the efforts of the Division for Governance, Public Administration and Finance of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat should be commended.

Italy is deeply committed to the consolidation of democracy in countries that have experienced institutional turmoil or conflicts. The case of Albania is a case in point and the most recent example. After the successful completion of Operation Alba and the holding of free, democratic elections in that country, there was a ministerial conference in Rome on 17 October. On that occasion, the Foreign Minister of Italy, Mr. Lamberto Dini stated,

"The rule of law, rehabilitation of the judiciary system, enhancement of standards in education, health and public administration, restructuring and raising the standards of police and defence forces to the level of modern and democratic societies, are all elements of a comprehensive plan to establish the right conditions for long-term stability."

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations could also make a remarkable contribution to the process of consolidating democracy. Such cooperation is taking place in Europe, especially with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We welcome the fact that the General Assembly will once again discuss this item in the coming days with the representative of OSCE.

This year two events highlighted the debate on new and restored democracies: the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, which took place at Bucharest, Romania, from 2 to 4 September, and the International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity, held in New York from 28 to 30 June 1997.

The Bucharest Conference, in which my country actively participated, underlined the mutually reinforcing relationship between democracy and sustainable development. It added a new dimension to the discussion of democracy and engendered new thinking on international cooperation in this area. New issues for consideration include the role of civil society and the private sector in democratization, gender participation and the use of globalization to benefit the consolidation of democracy.

Italy welcomes the guidelines, principles and recommendations adopted both at the Bucharest and the New York Conferences. We also wish to congratulate the Government of Romania on organizing such a successful Conference.

Finally, Italy deeply appreciates the decision of the Bucharest Conference to hold the next conference in an African country; Benin, I understand, was decided upon this morning. This decision symbolizes the invaluable contribution that countries from the African continent can make to the universalization of the concept and practice of democracy.

Mr. Spitzer (United States of America): The United States fully endorses the findings of the Secretary-General's recent report on United Nations support for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies — in particular, its observations and recommendations concerning electoral assistance, strengthening civil society, coordinating United Nations activities in democratization and governance, and promoting democracy in the twenty-first century.

The United States remains committed to the consolidation of the world's new or restored democracies. We understand that many of these nations face the challenge of simultaneous transitions from authoritarianism to democracy, from a planned to a market economy and even, in some cases, from war to peace.

That is why we applauded the focus of the recent Bucharest Conference on the critical link between democracy and sustainable development. And that is why we applaud the efforts of the Secretary-General to use the democratization and governance agenda as a means to bridge the peace and development agendas of the United Nations.

The steady growth in the number of new or restored democracies reflects not only the universality of our shared cause, but the effectiveness of the United Nations varied support.

The United States will continue to work closely with the Secretary-General and Member States to strengthen further this crucial support. We are honoured to co-sponsor the draft resolution in support of the efforts of the United Nations system to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

Mr. Jele (South Africa): My delegation attaches particular importance to this agenda item and is pleased to participate in this debate.

The United Nations has for decades been at the forefront of the struggle of peoples around the world for justice, equality and the exercise of their democratic rights and fundamental freedoms.

Africa has cast aside the yoke of colonialism and my own country has, with the support of this Organization and its membership, rid itself of the scourge of racial tyranny, known as the system of apartheid.

Our continent continues to suffer from sporadic incidents of civil strife and military dictatorships. It is, therefore, all the more appropriate that the Secretary-General has produced on this agenda item a forward-looking report, which contains an all-encompassing approach to promoting democracy for the twenty-first century.

The importance of the report lies in the fact that it addresses the process of global democratization in an integrated manner and underscores that democratization is

an exercise which does not fall exclusively within either the political or the developmental agendas of our Organization, but, rather, that it should be treated in a holistic fashion.

The report also draws upon the conclusions and recommendations adopted at the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, held in Bucharest in September 1997. My delegation wishes to highlight the conclusion reached that good governance is effective, participatory, transparent, accountable and equitable, and promotes the rule of law.

Governance is effective only where three key elements — the State, the private sector and civil society — function in partnership in creating the political, economic and social conditions which are conducive to ensuring sustainable human development. A sound democratic structure and good governance present two of the cornerstones of peace and development in any society.

My delegation also notes the importance which the Secretary-General attaches to the emergence of civil society as being critical to the processes of democratization and empowerment. We concur with this view, and also believe that the role of civil society should not be restricted merely to the process of democratization. Civil society has an equally important role to play in areas such as the promotion of development, human rights and the rule of law.

My delegation is also in agreement with the recommendation of the Bucharest Conference that, in order to achieve the desired success in the process of democratization, the international community should make a commitment to collaborate with the new or restored democracies, to provide adequate support for the attainment of the objectives of democracy and fostering and expanding governance, democracy and participation programmes.

The United Nations system continues to play an important role in helping new or restored democracies to meet the challenges of developing the economic and social infrastructures needed for sustainable human development. My delegation notes with satisfaction the Secretary-General's observation that the United Nations does not endorse any specific form of government, and that democracy is a goal and not a model.

The cold-war era is something of the past. While the threat of inter-State conflict remains in certain parts of the world today, the focus has turned to internal strife. It is widely recognized that the role of the United Nations in assisting to resolve these threats to peace has become far more intricate. However, we cannot shirk our responsibilities simply because the task has become too difficult.

The obligations of our Organization to the peoples in these countries and territories and the responsibility of Member States in helping to promote and consolidate democratic cultures and societies, places new demands on us as we prepare to enter the twenty-first century. In this context, my delegation fully concurs with the Secretary-General's observation that the current system-wide process of reform marks an opportune moment for us to reflect on innovative approaches in order to deal with these challenges.

As a sponsor, my delegation fully supports the draft resolution, and hopes that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): Today we live in a world that enjoys more pluralism and a greater number of democratic Governments and democratic global institutions than in all of human history. The Republic of Korea, as a country which has experienced many challenges in its own long journey to the democracy it enjoys today, knows the critical importance of political pluralism and respect for human rights. We therefore are pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/52/L.28, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

Although an impressive number of States have been successful in democratization, in many parts of the world democracy remains a fragile construct, with weak socio-economic foundations. In certain regions a disconcerting number of people continue to suffer under oppressive authoritarian regimes. And in many new democracies economic hardships are in danger of undermining popular support for open societies and free markets.

The success of democratic changes requires wise leadership, good governance and popular support, as well as favourable external conditions. Civil society has a vital role to play in this process and, indeed, the involvement of non-governmental organizations in fledgling democracies has helped lay the groundwork for a tradition of pluralism. We also believe that the United Nations and the international community should continue to support the

efforts of Governments of the new or restored democracies to strengthen the roots of their new systems.

We would also like to assure you, Madam President, that the Republic of Korea will continue to provide various forms of assistance to the world's newly democratized countries. One of the numerous ways Korea has been helping those countries is through its expanding programme of development assistance, particularly through support for human resources development. Based on our experience, strong human capital is one of the most critical components of development and is essential for strengthening the roots of any nascent democracy. When countries invest substantially in human resources development, they enable their people to become agents of their own development and foster a strong civil society.

The Secretary-General's report provides a thorough overview of the issues relating to democracy. My delegation is pleased to agree with his observations and support the recommendations contained in the report on the issues of electoral assistance, the strengthening of civil society, the coordination of activities in democratization and governance, and the promotion of democratization in the next century.

We realize that, as the report indicates, in a world with a large number of fledgling democracies, further steps should be taken by the United Nations system as a whole to ensure better cooperation and coordinate its democratization activities, including the provision of electoral assistance. In support of United Nations electoral assistance activities, the Republic of Korea has participated in various electoral observer missions, including those in Cambodia, South Africa, Mozambique, Palestine, Bosnia and Algeria.

Allow me to assure you, Madam President, that in all areas of United Nations efforts to promote democratization Korea stands ready to continue its active participation and support. As a relatively young democracy ourselves, Korea is particularly committed to the promotion and consolidation of democracy and good governance around the globe.

Democracy, we believe, is one of the fundamental building blocks of development and prosperity. Another of those building blocks — closely related to democracy — is respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. And on that note, let me take this opportunity to give a reminder of the important

commemoration next year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That commemoration will, we trust, help further strengthen the resolve of the international community to promote democracy and good governance throughout the world.

On a final note, my delegation would like to thank both the Romanian Government for hosting the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, this past September, and the Romanian delegation for the leading role it has played in submitting this important draft resolution.

Mr. Sallah (Gambia): My delegation attaches great importance to this agenda item — hence my maiden statement from this rostrum today.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report. My congratulations go to the Romanian delegation on the successful outcome of the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development.

Prior to July 1994 my country, the Gambia, was synonymous with multi-party politics and periodical elections. Outwardly, this state of affairs was commended by the international community. However, whilst the Gambia was being singled out as one of the African countries with democratic forms of government, characterized by periodical elections, its so-called democracy was bedevilled with rampant corruption, widespread poverty and social injustice.

To avoid the country's sliding into civil strife, the military intervened on 22 July 1994 in a peaceful manner and introduced a comprehensive programme of rectification and reconstruction which was divided into governance aspects and development projects. It introduced new and meaningful dimensions to democracy by introducing a civic education programme in a country where 80 per cent of the population is illiterate. The military also lowered the voting age from 21 years to 18 years, to make democracy more participatory, and revised the 1970 Constitution to include not only the traditional concepts of fundamental human rights and freedoms, independence of the judiciary and the rule of law, but also the right to development in the socio-economic domain.

Also, for the first time an ombudsman was introduced to make the Government and public services more responsive to the rights and needs of the citizenry. The

governance aspect of the programme proceeded hand in hand with the implementation of the development projects.

What the military Government achieved was admirable and unprecedented. During this brief two-year period, it organized a referendum to adopt the revised Constitution and it held free and fair elections — both presidential, held in September 1996, and legislative, in January 1997. Both elections were conducted under the supervision of an independent electoral commission.

In the area of development projects, more high schools were built, a new hospital and a new international airport were also constructed, new macadamized roads were built, and there was much improvement in the water and electricity supply.

The implementation of these development projects, under the tenets of social justice outlined above, is thus in consonance with the principles of democracy and social justice, as enunciated in paragraph 24 of the Secretary-General's report [A/52/513].

My delegation is also in agreement with paragraph 27 of the report, which says that the United Nations

“does not endorse or promote any specific form of government. Democracy is not a model to be copied but a goal to be attained.” [A/52/513, para. 27]

My delegation believes in a goal of development and social justice, accountability and the enjoyment of human rights, and not only through the holding of free and fair elections.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the United Nations for providing financial and logistical assistance for the implementation of the programme of rectification and reconstruction during the two-year period when the Gambia was under military rule. This enabled us to usher in the genuine democracy which has now been put in place in the Gambia.

My delegation continues to count on the United Nations system for the promotion and strengthening of democracy. Our system of democracy in the Gambia has been translated from rhetoric to reality, and the democratic principles enshrined in our new Constitution are no longer regarded as laws in books but not in action.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*):
The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution
A/52/L.28.

I would like to point out that since its introduction,
the following countries have become sponsors of draft
resolution A/52/L.28: Angola, Belarus, Croatia, France,
Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Thailand and
Uruguay.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the
draft resolution?

*Draft resolution A/52/L.28 was adopted (resolution
52/18).*

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*):
May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to
conclude its consideration of agenda item 38?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 34 (*continued*)

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the
Economic Cooperation Organization**

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/313)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.20/Rev.1)

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*):
We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution
A/52/L.20/Rev.1.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft
resolution A/52/L.20/Rev.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the
draft resolution?

*Draft resolution A/52/L.20/Rev.1 was adopted
(resolution 52/19).*

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*):
May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to
conclude its consideration of agenda item 34?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.



General Assembly

Fifty-second Session

52nd plenary meeting
Monday, 24 November 1997, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Udovenko (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: reports of the General Committee

Second report of the General Committee (A/52/250/Add.1)

The President: This morning, I first draw the attention of representatives to the second report of the General Committee, which is contained in document A/52/250/Add.1, concerning a request by Guyana and Jamaica for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item entitled "Admission of the International Seabed Authority to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund".

In paragraph 2 of the report, the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the item entitled "Admission of the International Seabed Authority to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund" be included in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional item in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee further decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the additional item be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to allocate this item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decision just taken.

Agenda item 16 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(c) Election of nineteen members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

The President: The General Assembly will now turn to the election of 19 members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 May 1998.

The 19 outgoing members are Argentina, Austria, Chile, Ecuador, Hungary, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Kenya, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Spain, the Sudan, Thailand, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America and Uruguay. Those members are eligible for immediate re-election.



I should like to remind members that, as of 1 June 1998, the following States will continue to be represented on the Commission: Algeria, Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Singapore and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Therefore, those 17 States are not eligible for election, since they are members of the Commission.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

However, I wish to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The President: Regarding candidatures, I have been informed by the Chairmen of the respective regional groups that, for the four vacant seats from among the African States, the four endorsed candidates are Burkina Faso, Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda.

From among the Asian States, the four endorsed candidates for four seats are Fiji, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Thailand.

From among the Eastern European States, there are four candidates for three seats. The candidates are the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania and Romania.

As for the four seats from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, the endorsed candidates are Colombia, Honduras and Paraguay. The group has also endorsed Argentina and Uruguay for the fourth seat on the understanding that Argentina and Uruguay will alternate representation on an annual basis, starting with Argentina. This arrangement is within the power of the General Assembly, which established the Commission and determined its composition by General Assembly resolution 2205 (XXI) of 17 December 1966.

For the four seats from among the Western European and other States, there are five candidates, namely, Austria, Greece, Italy, Spain and the United States of America.

Since the number of candidates endorsed by the African States, the Asian States and the Latin American and Caribbean States, with Argentina and Uruguay alternating on an annual basis, corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each group, may I therefore declare those candidates elected for a six-year term beginning on 1 June 1998, bearing in mind that Argentina and Uruguay will alternate representation on an annual basis, starting with Argentina?

It was so decided.

The President: With regard to the Eastern European States and the Western European and other States, the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies allocated to those regions. Therefore, the Assembly will proceed to a vote by secret ballot to elect three members from the Eastern European States and four members from the Western European and other States.

I should like to inform the Assembly that the number of candidates not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, receiving the greatest number of votes and not less than the majority required, will be declared elected. In the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a restricted ballot limited to those candidates which have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: Ballot papers marked "C" and "E" will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the three States from among the Eastern European States and the names of the four States from among the Western European and other States for which they want to vote.

A ballot paper containing more names from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it will be declared invalid. Names of Member States on a ballot paper which do not belong to that region shall not be counted.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nyein (Myanmar), Mr. Contreras (Venezuela) and Mr. Buhera (Zimbabwe) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.30 a.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group C — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	164
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	164
Abstentions:	2
Number of members voting:	162
Required majority:	82
Number of votes obtained:	
Lithuania	133
Hungary	111
Romania	110
Czech Republic	106
Ukraine	2
Slovakia	1

Group E — Western European and other States

Number of ballot papers:	164
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	164
Abstentions:	1
Number of Members voting:	163
Required majority:	82
Number of votes obtained:	
Italy	140
Spain	138
Austria	136
United States	115
Greece	96

Austria, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Spain and the United States of America, having obtained the required majority and having received the greatest number of votes, were elected members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law for a six-year term beginning on 1 June 1998.

The President: The following 18 States are therefore elected members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law for a six-year term beginning on

1 June 1998: Austria, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Fiji, Honduras, Hungary, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Kenya, Lithuania, Paraguay, Romania, Spain, the Sudan, Thailand, Uganda and the United States of America.

Argentina and Uruguay were elected to alternate representation on an annual basis, starting with Argentina.

I congratulate the States which have been elected members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election. And I apologize for the long delay in counting the votes.

This concludes our consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 42

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/374)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.8)

The President: I call on the representative of Zimbabwe to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.8.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe): This morning I shall be wearing two caps as I address the General Assembly on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In the first part of my statement, I shall be introducing the draft resolution on United Nations/OAU cooperation, and I shall do so on behalf of member States of the OAU. In the second part of my statement, I shall be speaking as Head of the delegation of Zimbabwe, and I shall signal to the Assembly when I make the transition.

It is my honour, as the representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, His Excellency Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.8 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, a relationship which has spanned three decades. This cooperation has involved the United Nations Secretariat

and the various specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

The establishment of an OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the determination of the organization to become proactive, especially in the areas of preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building, has made that cooperation not only more important but more urgent in terms of achieving the desired objectives.

The manifested desire of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, to strengthen that cooperation has resulted in intensive and extensive consultations, exchange of information and periodic meetings between him and the Secretary-General of the OAU, Salim Ahmed Salim. They have for the first time agreed to institutionalize their meetings and to meet alternately in Africa, when the OAU summit convenes, and in New York during the annual session of the General Assembly.

This draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity is being submitted in the wake of two important events that took place, first in Harare, Zimbabwe, in June this year, and here at the United Nations on 25 September this year, when the Security Council met in a special meeting at the ministerial level. At each of those meetings, the Chairman of the OAU spoke on behalf of the people of Africa about the issues of democratization, peace and security and, most importantly, development.

The draft resolution before the Assembly outlines both the political and economic challenges facing Africa and the urgent need for the international community to respond in practical terms and in the spirit of the appeal the Secretary-General of the United Nations made before the special meeting of the Security Council, when he said:

"We — and I speak not only of this Council but of the United Nations and the international community generally — must respond promptly and effectively to Africa's call. We must do so with specific measures and clear proposals for action." [S/PV.3819, p. 5].

The draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity outlines specific measures and clear proposals that require urgent action on the part of the United Nations Secretariat in particular and the international community in general.

It would be remiss of the OAU not to express its appreciation for the generous support and assistance that it has so far received from a number of countries and international organizations.

I conclude with the words of the United Nations Secretary-General himself, when he said in relation to Africa during the ministerial meeting of the Security Council:

"We have dissected and debated Africa, and studied and summarized its challenges, for decades. Now is the time for action." [*supra*, p. 5]

I therefore have the honour to submit draft resolution A/52/L.8 for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly.

It is now my wish to make a few remarks on behalf of the delegation of Zimbabwe. Let me express my delegation's deepest appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (A/52/374). My delegation welcomes this report, as it demonstrates the practical working relationship between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in such areas as exchange of information, peace and security, and economic and social development.

This debate comes at an opportune time, when cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, a cooperation which was born 32 years ago, in 1965, has substantially expanded in scope. Not only has the OAU been actively involved in the work of strengthening cooperation and unity among African countries, it has also made considerable contributions to the work of the United Nations, particularly in the sphere of the maintenance of peace and security, in line with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter on the role of regional organizations.

The past year has been eventful in Africa's social, economic and political spheres. Africa's political successes in the area of decolonization have been tarnished by the prevalence of insecurity and civil strife in some parts of the continent. Fighting has been going on in varying degrees in Sudan, in Somalia and in the Great Lakes region. Zimbabwe welcomes efforts to promote peace through regional organizations as well as through good-neighbourliness. The OAU mechanism for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict

was created in 1993 to serve this purpose. We count on the continued support of the United Nations, particularly in technical, logistical and material terms, to ensure that these regional arrangements are strengthened and sustained. My delegation welcomes the initiative of the United Nations to train and familiarize staff from the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security and the OAU Conflict Prevention Division with the United Nations Department of Political Affairs.

It is our belief that cooperation between the two organizations should go beyond peace and security. The thirty-third session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, which my country hosted, convened the inaugural session of the African Economic Community. Cooperation between the United Nations and subregional economic groupings such as SADC, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) should be established, and, where they exist, should be strengthened. My delegation is of the hope that such efforts will continue to enjoy the tangible support of the international community and the United Nations system as a whole.

My delegation is convinced that the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa, if scrupulously implemented, could help create an enabling environment for the much needed economic growth and prosperity of the African continent. It should further strengthen ongoing efforts by the United Nations and the OAU towards eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development.

Finally, cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations should buttress the resolve of African countries to overcome the present obstacles and to launch the continent on the path of economic recovery and growth. The Africa of the mass media has been one of monumental human tragedy, but today we are witnessing an African renaissance which needs to be supported by the United Nations and by the entire international community.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to be speaking on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country of Cyprus align themselves with this statement.

The European Union thanks the Secretary-General for his exhaustive report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The European Union considers that regional organizations have a growing role to play in today's world and stresses the particular importance of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. The role of regional organizations may prove particularly effective given that those organizations represent member States in their individual capacities. The importance which the Union attaches to Africa is based on common interests, values and objectives: the desire to help Africa to achieve peace, stability and sustainable development in order to improve the quality of life of its peoples.

The Organization of African Unity and subregional organizations in Africa provide an appropriate framework for dialogue and cooperation to that end. We welcome the important role played by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — and in particular the efforts carried out in Liberia by its Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Likewise, the European Union welcomes the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreement in the Central African Republic. In East Africa, we have noted the interesting initiatives taken by the East African Cooperation body and by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

For those reasons, the European Union encourages the regular contacts and dialogue it holds with regional organizations in Africa, and in particular its continuing dialogue with the OAU. In this context, the European Union welcomes the first ministerial meeting between troikas of the OAU and of the European Union, held at New York on 23 June 1997. The purpose of the meeting was to take stock of the process of regular political consultations at senior-official level between the OAU and the European Union initiated in 1994 and to pave the way for future cooperation. On 26 and 27 June 1997, the European Union presidency and the European Commission visited Addis Ababa to discuss how to finalize a plan for expanding the ability of the OAU to process the information necessary for preventive diplomacy. Similarly, the European Union has been in contact with the members of SADC to set a date for a meeting of senior officials planned for December 1997 at Lusaka.

On 16 and 17 June 1997, at the Amsterdam meeting of the European Council, the Council stated that it looked

forward to a year-2000 summit meeting of Heads of State or Government of the European Union and of Africa. The Union attaches great importance to the preparations for that summit with a view to achieving tangible results. The goal of the summit will be to establish a broad political dialogue at the highest level between the European Union and Africa, which will make it possible to develop a more effective and better integrated relationship between our two continents.

We welcome the establishment of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa; we are convinced that this will be particularly useful in helping to resolve conflicts and reduce tension. It is for Africans first and foremost to take the initiative to restore peace on the continent and to take the principal responsibility for that peace. It is important for African countries to have the capacity to participate in peacekeeping missions authorized by the Security Council. In this respect, we welcome the efforts of countries that wish to shift from direct or bilateral military cooperation to active support towards African countries in the framework of a multilateral approach in liaison with the United Nations, the OAU and other partners.

The European Union provides concrete assistance in this respect. On 2 June 1997 it adopted a common position on the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa. The European Union will strengthen its dialogue with the OAU and with subregional organizations on concrete opportunities for backing their efforts in the fields of early warning, preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping and in promoting awareness of the importance of respect for human rights, the rule of law, a pluralistic society, democratic institutions and practices and a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

In that context, the European Union welcomes the initiative and action by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the OAU to cooperate and consult with one another regularly on major African issues. Since January 1997 they have together examined the need to strengthen their association in order to boost their mutual ability to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa. The appointment of Mr. Mohammed Sahnoun as joint United Nations-OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region, a mandate subsequently extended to the Congo, represents significant progress in that direction.

The European Union is pleased that the two Secretaries-General will henceforth meet twice a year, and it welcomes the meeting between the two Secretariats, to be

held in Addis Ababa in early December 1997, to define specific measures for strengthening and widening that cooperation.

The European Union also welcomes the Security Council meeting at ministerial level on the situation in Africa, which took place on 25 September 1997. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report on this matter to be presented in February 1998.

The European Union recognizes the pre-eminent role of the United Nations in peacekeeping matters. It is convinced of the need for the closest possible cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. In this regard, we note that Article 52 of the United Nations Charter recognizes the special role which should be played by regional organizations.

When we look at the African continent today, we can see that there are grounds for confidence in the future. Democracy is taking root in an increasing number of States, and in a number of countries healthy debate is being conducted on the best way of adapting that democracy more directly to the needs of the population, encouraging the people to participate more fully in the conduct of public affairs and enabling them to have a more direct influence on their own future. The OAU has an influential role — which, of course, means responsibilities — and should encourage and endorse such debate. It is for the international community, and particularly the United Nations, to support the OAU in this task. The European Union encourages intensification of the dialogue and cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in these fields.

While congratulating Africa on the substantial progress it has made in its efforts to establish more widespread democracy and to deal with the problems arising within its borders, the European Union takes due note of the serious concerns expressed by Africans themselves over events occurring in a number of regions of their continent and over the anti-democratic trends noted in some countries.

The European Union feels that it is its duty to speak out against attacks on democracy and to promote a peaceful settlement of disputes. There are therefore occasions when we consider it necessary to make public — in the United Nations or elsewhere — our concern over events occurring in certain countries, in Africa and elsewhere.

There is still not peace in the Great Lakes region, and the adjacent countries have been affected by the conflict. The European Union continues to lend its full support to efforts by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, as well as by leaders in the region and other eminent persons concerned, to restore peace there. The European Union's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Aldo Ajello, will continue to collaborate closely with them.

The European Union is still in favour of the convening, under the auspices of both the United Nations and the OAU, of an international conference to deal comprehensively with the situation in the Great Lakes region. The Union would also emphasize the role that the international community can play in helping the countries of the region to resolve their problems.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the European Union will continue to urge President Kabila to put in hand without delay the electoral process, to be carried out within the two-year period announced, and to honour his agreement to facilitate the work of the humanitarian organizations which aid and repatriate refugees. It is imperative that the United Nations be able freely to conduct its investigation into the alleged massacres and other violations of human rights in Congolese territory.

As to the Republic of the Congo, the European Union profoundly regrets that the international mediation undertaken by President Bongo of Gabon and Mr. Mohamed Sahnoun, the Special Representative of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU, did not succeed, and express our disapproval of the fact that the political crisis turned into an armed conflict which resulted in a change of government without the people of the Congo having an opportunity to express their opinion in free elections. The European Union asks the authorities to restart the democratic process and to as soon as possible prepare free, transparent and fair democratic elections, which should take place under international supervision. The European Union condemns all external interference in the Republic of the Congo, especially the intervention of foreign forces, in violation of the United Nations Charter, and asks that all foreign forces, including mercenaries, be withdrawn immediately.

The European Union is concerned about the situation in Sierra Leone and welcomes the peace efforts made by the States of the region. We express our concern over the worsening of the humanitarian situation in that country, and

hope that Security Council resolution 1132 (1997) will allow for the speedy restoration of the democratically elected Government and a return to constitutional order. The European Union calls upon ECOWAS to ensure that sanctions against Sierra Leone are imposed in full compliance with resolution 1132 (1997) and with international law on humanitarian aid. We welcome the ECOWAS peace plan for Sierra Leone published in Conakry on 23 October 1997, and await with interest the evaluation of the United Nations Secretariat reconnaissance mission.

As regards Angola, we are extremely concerned over the continued atmosphere of tension and the impasse in the peace process. It is imperative that UNITA comply with all its obligations under the Lusaka Protocol, which it voluntarily signed. For that reason, the European Union appeals to UNITA to comply without delay with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 1127 (1997) and 1135 (1997). The European Union is taking all measures to impose sanctions in accordance with those resolutions, and encourages all other States to do likewise.

Economic development continues to be the major challenge to be met by Africa. The European Union is well aware of this. It is encouraging to see that many African countries have undertaken sweeping reforms of their economic policies and their public sectors, thereby enabling growth to recommence. They have also made significant and praiseworthy progress in essential sectors such as health, education and the provision of basic services.

At the same time, the fact remains that half the population of sub-Saharan Africa lives below the poverty line. That poverty reminds us that economic and social progress has not yet been achieved there. We feel that to reduce poverty the African countries should, with encouragement and support from the international community, achieve and maintain a stable rate of per capita income growth. Development programmes should also have the objective of ensuring that the poorest groups of the population are their first beneficiaries.

The European Union will continue to play a decisive role in helping Africa achieve these objectives. The framework for our aid is already in place by virtue of the Lomé Convention, which is the cornerstone of our efforts. Aid granted by the European Union under the Lomé Convention and the assistance that it gives through other sources make the European Union today the largest

aid donor in the world. The contribution of the European Union represents more than 60 per cent of the total aid given to sub-Saharan Africa by countries from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) zone. We reaffirm our determination to continue our effort to help African developing countries and to strengthen our cooperation with them in order to better ensure their future well-being and prosperity.

This is the essence of the consideration that we and our partners in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific have given to the future of the Lomé Convention. The European Union is determined to preserve the specificity of this unique partnership, which links it to many African countries.

For its part, Africa must accept its responsibilities so that development may be sustainable and prosperity ensured. Each Government is above all responsible for ensuring that its people enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms, while creating conditions favourable for economic growth. All States also have responsibilities towards the other States in their region and for their shared environment. Those responsibilities go far beyond the need to respect each other's sovereignty.

The Organization of African Unity has played an important role by determining these responsibilities, studying ways of guaranteeing that they are honoured and helping to define a common vision for the future of the African continent. The European Union is convinced that the Organization of African Unity, with the help and cooperation of the international community, in particular the United Nations, will take up the challenge of helping Africa to enter the next millennium with confidence and determination.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The world community is cognisant of the fact that Africa is a continent that has not only been faced with the difficulties of economic and social development, but has also suffered a large number of conflicts between and within its nation States. The origins of the conflicts are complex, encompassing economic, political, cultural and social parameters. Among the international factors, conflicts have been manifested as a consequence of the end of the cold war and its aftermath, as well as of the globalization and liberalization of the world economy, which have generated a sense of political and economic insecurity in Africa.

A host of problems in Africa result from these conflicts. One such problem is the question of Africa's refugee crisis, which is not diminishing. Millions of African refugees and displaced persons, representing the highest numbers in world refugee flows, have brought about a potential source of further tension within and between States. As such, refugee assistance and the protection of refugee rights are a priority in the prevention and management of conflict and the building of peace and security in our region.

My delegation supports the view that, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, in document A/52/1, it is a primary aim of the United Nations to expand the domain of peaceful change to ensure that Member States do not resort to violence, by providing means through which conflicts may be contained and resolved and by dealing with their root causes. In this regard, it is encouraging to note that the United Nations is committed to cooperating with regional organizations. This strategy offers great potential. The appointment of a joint United Nations-OAU Special Representative is a commendable effort, aimed at enhancing close contact between the Secretariats of the United Nations and the OAU. It is our hope that the Special Representative will further enhance the coordination of the efforts of both the United Nations and the OAU, in close consultation with the Secretaries-General of the two Organizations, so as to build upon the capabilities of the two Organizations in their joint effort at preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa.

One of the major aspirations of the Organization of African Unity is the development of a peaceful Africa, which would contribute to the achievement of the broader aspirations for a peaceful world. Africa's perseverance in the pursuit of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peace-building, including post-conflict peace-building, is articulated by the efforts of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the OAU Conflict Prevention Division.

My delegation is encouraged by the cooperation of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs with the OAU at various levels and in different ways, including the invitation to the focal point of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security and also to the OAU Conflict Prevention Division for familiarization visits to the Department of Political Affairs. Exchange of information and visits of relevant staff members within

the Organizations will improve the coordination of the implementation of agreed programmes of cooperation between the United Nations system and the OAU.

The Kingdom of Swaziland is encouraged by the continuing cooperation between the United Nations system and funds and programmes in the field of economic and social development. It is common knowledge that, despite a large natural resource base and the adoption of a series of structural adjustment programmes, African economies are still characterized by low economic growth rates, stemming mainly from internal and external imbalances, low productivity in agriculture, skills shortages and high population growth rates, as well as education and health problems. The new transnational threats, in the form of transnational networks of crime, drug trafficking, money laundering and terrorism, also have a very significant negative impact on the already fragile economies of our continent.

The efforts of the United Nations and the international community to avert these difficulties faced by African countries are displayed in the initiatives that have been set up, such as the United Nations programme of action for African Economic Recovery and Development, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF); the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa; and the Tokyo Declaration and programme for action. These initiatives have been launched over the years because of the deteriorating socio-economic situation of the African continent. The implementation approaches, work programmes and resource mobilization strategies that have been established should be closely followed to ensure that the goals for which these initiatives were established do not remain merely visionary.

It will be recalled that, in supporting UN-NADAF and the Tokyo Declaration, donor countries committed themselves to assist Africa in four main areas: official development assistance, external debt alleviation, market access and foreign direct investment. The same commitment has been made in the various conferences and summits on issues of development held in the 1990s. However, only a few donor countries have lived up to their commitment, and we are grateful to them. Otherwise the situation continues to remain bleak, as official development assistance is on the decline and African countries are yet to benefit significantly from the recent international trade expansion and growth in foreign direct investment. The important question is "when"? Swaziland and most African countries have committed themselves to the establishment of sound political institutional structures. The approach of

adherence to the principle of accountability has widely increased in the continent. All these are a clear indication that the climate for trade and investment would be right and rewarding to foreign entrepreneurs. For these reasons, my delegation believes that it is morally correct for developed countries to fulfil their obligations.

The donation by UNDP of \$3 million towards capacity-building in the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution will benefit the organization, as it will strengthen its financial capacity to carry out the earmarked projects in this area. Swaziland is particularly encouraged to note that approximately 10 per cent of the budget of this project will be devoted to conflict prevention activities involving women. It is to be borne in mind, though, that the budgetary allocation to this important area of activities involving women is far from sufficient, as more than half of the 20 million refugees fleeing conflicts in Africa are women and children.

I conclude by reaffirming my Government's commitment to its membership in the United Nations and the OAU. Swaziland believes in the importance of the purposes and goals for which these two bodies were established. Whilst the Security Council has devoted substantial financial and human resources to the maintenance of peace and security throughout the world, the OAU, for its part, has shown commitment to peace and security in the region by the establishment of its own Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

Furthermore, the Economic and Social Council, through its subsidiary organs, has established numerous programmes aimed at assisting Member States in their development efforts. Likewise, the OAU at its thirty-third Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Harare, Zimbabwe, this year adopted a number of resolutions aimed at the promotion of the economic growth and social development of Africa.

There is a strong political will on the part of African countries to resolve the problems in Africa. What Africa lacks is the financial strength and human resources. It is for this reason that the OAU would rather concentrate its efforts on preventive action, as it is a less expensive priority. It is also for this reason that Africa seeks strengthened and broadened cooperation with the United Nations, including the enhanced support and assistance of the international community.

Mr. Konishi (Japan): The importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly in addressing issues of economic development and conflict prevention, cannot be over-emphasized. Japan heartily welcomes the emphasis which the Organization of African Unity (OAU) places on its cooperation with the United Nations in these areas, as reflected in the draft resolution introduced by the representative of Zimbabwe.

As Japan's Foreign Minister mentioned in his statement at this session of the General Assembly:

"Development and peace are, so to speak, two sides of the same coin. Without development, the causes of conflicts will not be eliminated, and without peace the conditions for development will not be met." [*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Plenary Meetings, 8th meeting, p. 7*]

Indeed, underlying many of the regional conflicts we have witnessed in recent years are social and economic factors that must be addressed in order to achieve and maintain durable peace.

In the recognition that peace and development are inextricably related, Japan is taking two initiatives which it hopes will strengthen the cooperative efforts of the United Nations and regional organizations, and particularly the OAU, in both of these areas.

First, this coming January, Japan will convene in Tokyo an International Conference on Strategies for Conflict Prevention, to which it has invited international experts as well as representatives of interested Member States. In preparing for the conference, Japan intends to consult with the OAU as well as with various countries, especially those in Africa. We anticipate that the conference, focusing mainly on the African region, will produce concrete proposals as to how to resolve conflicts through cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU.

Secondly, the fundamental solution of conflicts in Africa requires that development is set firmly on track and that poverty is eradicated. Bearing this in mind, Japan has been focusing its efforts on African development issues and is planning the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), to be convened at the ministerial level next year. The framework of an agenda for action was worked out at a preparatory meeting held in Tokyo last month.

Many of the issues which the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, is called upon to address are African problems. Therefore, it was fitting and proper that the Council met at the ministerial level in September to discuss the situation in Africa. We are now looking forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the sources of conflict in Africa early next year. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Japan will continue to work actively in order to contribute to this process. At the same time, Japan is working to foster a greater cooperative relationship between the OAU and the international community in the effort to tackle the complex causes of conflicts. Japan is consulting closely with the OAU in order to determine how, in addition to its contributions to the OAU Peace Fund, it can provide assistance in the areas of development cooperation, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building in Africa.

I should like, on behalf of the Government of Japan, to commend the initiatives and coordinating efforts of the OAU in the area of conflict prevention, peace-building and economic development in Africa. We trust that its evolving cooperative relationship with the United Nations will serve as a model for other regional and subregional organizations as they address the issues of peace and development.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In this brief statement, Argentina would like to express its gratitude to and support for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for its efforts over so many years to promote peace, democracy and development in Africa.

These efforts are bearing fruit. Most African countries are successfully strengthening their democratic institutions, promoting human rights and reforming their economies. Through its cooperation machinery, the OAU, has been gradually creating the conditions for achieving these objectives.

In the same way, Argentina after decades of political instability, legal insecurity and a closed economy, has made sacrifices in finding its way back to the path to democracy and is consolidating its political, legal and economic institutions. This is why we can well understand and firmly support the determination of the peoples of Africa and their leaders to live in peace in States based on the rule of law.

Argentina has benefited and is benefiting from the trend towards a change in the democratic framework in Africa. Not only has Argentina been able to strengthen its bilateral relations with many countries, it has also bolstered extremely fruitful trading links.

Alongside these positive developments, some countries of the continent have suffered political crises. These situations have also arisen and exist in other regions and have been overcome. The OAU has responded actively and supportively, again showing its commitment to finding peaceful solutions to disputes and defending the rule of law and its concern at the plight of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Within the limits of its resources, Argentina has been working in and has contributed constructively to peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and electoral monitoring. It has taken part in peacekeeping operations in Angola, Mozambique and Western Sahara and, through "White Helmets" missions or directly, has provided humanitarian assistance to various countries of the continent. Argentina also provided electoral observers for the first free and universal elections that marked the end of apartheid in South Africa, the referendum on self-determination in Eritrea and the legislative elections in Algeria last June.

On the occasion of the meeting of ministers for foreign affairs of the States members of the Security Council on 25 September 1997, which was chaired by the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Mrs. Albright, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Di Tella, reiterated Argentina's commitment to cooperate actively in efforts to promote development in Africa. In this connection, Argentina has some 70 cooperation programmes with Africa currently under way. They cover areas as diverse as training in agriculture and cattle-breeding, control of epidemics, computer science, reform of the State and privatization.

In this auspicious context for cooperation, it is worth recalling what the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, said on 20 November on the occasion of Africa Industrialization Day:

"In 1996, for the first time in 20 years, Africa experienced growth exceeding 4 per cent. More and more countries are experiencing remarkable economic expansion. The private sector is beginning to play its role in powering the economy. Everywhere, civil society is creating the institutions it needs in order to

be heard." [See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Plenary Meetings*, 50th meeting]

To conclude, we feel that this is a fitting opportunity for us to pay tribute to Africa, which forms a very significant component of the United Nations. Without the African initiative, no changes in areas such as decolonization, disarmament, human rights, the environment and development would have been possible. We would like to reiterate our support for the aims and purposes of the OAU, namely those of peace and progress for its members.

Mr. Mohammed (Ethiopia): May I begin my statement by thanking the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the comprehensive report he has submitted to the General Assembly in document A/52/374 on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity". My Government highly appreciates the efforts made by the Secretary-General to revitalize cooperation between the two organizations.

The end of the 1970s and the 1980s were lost decades for Africa. Today, Africa has emerged from the stagnation of the 1980s, and the 1990s can be described as the decade of renaissance and hope.

Many African countries have taken far-reaching measures to promote good governance, democratization, popular participation and political pluralism. Collectively and individually, they have now grappled with socio-economic development challenges by introducing bold economic reform measures, which are often painful. Economic structures are being strengthened and an environment conducive to private investment has been created. These efforts by African countries require a supportive international environment to succeed. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) should be seen in this context.

The United Nations system has a special role in promoting Africa's socio-economic development and the peaceful settlement of conflicts that affect the continent. It is encouraging to note, as illustrated in the Secretary-General's report, that the support of the United Nations system to Africa through various initiatives has increased over the past year.

Consultations between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU on key African issues over the past year, and the steps taken to build closer ties and coordination between the two organizations have set the right direction and momentum for enhanced United Nations-OAU cooperation. The appointment of Ambassador Mohammed Sahnoun as joint United Nations-OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region has been a most welcome step that further highlighted the new spirit of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the OAU.

My delegation notes with appreciation that the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the areas of peace and security has entered an important phase. In particular, we are pleased that measures are being taken to enhance contacts and exchanges of ideas and information between the Secretariats of the two Organizations on critical issues of common concern. The invitations that have been extended to subregional Organizations, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) are also welcome steps, and such contacts with subregional organizations should be strengthened and expanded.

One of the most important areas of coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU is that of enhancing the capacity of the OAU and its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution to deal with conflict situations in Africa. In this connection, my delegation recalls the report of the Secretary-General on improving preparedness for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Africa, document A/50/711, and the subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly and recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. In this regard, my delegation looks forward to the Secretary-General's report to be submitted as requested by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations at its 1997 session.

While the United Nations has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, regional organizations such as the OAU can also play an important role in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in their respective regions. The second meeting of the Chiefs of Defence Staff of Member States of the OAU Central Organ, held in October this year in Harare, Zimbabwe, highlighted this important role of the OAU, and the need for enhanced cooperation between it and the United Nations. To this end, my delegation believes that greater attention should be given to

cooperation between the two Organizations with a view to enhancing the OAU's capacity in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

In the economic and social fields, my delegation notes with satisfaction the important role that the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) continues to play, in cooperation with the OAU and the African Development Bank (ADB), in particular, in the establishment of an African Economic Community (AEC). The ECA's cooperation with the OAU in other important fields also demonstrates the indispensable role and contribution of this regional Economic Commission in promoting Africa's economic and social development.

Cooperation between the OAU and the various United Nations agencies and programmes, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and others over the past year has been encouraging. The UNDP has given valuable assistance in support of Africa's economic integration and to strengthen the capacity of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The UNDP's assistance for peace efforts in Africa and the planned fund-raising campaigns and donor conferences to increase the financial resources of the OAU Peace Fund are very commendable.

While we commend the encouraging trend in the cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations system, we wish at the same time to point out that such cooperation should aim at ensuring the support of the United Nations system and the international community at large for the implementation of programmes adopted by African Governments. In this connection, we wish to highlight in particular that both the Lagos Plan of Action and the document "Relaunching Africa's economic and social development: the Cairo Agenda for Action" remain valid as Africa's long-term development strategy, which requires the full support of the United Nations system.

The challenge facing Africa in the political field is essentially the achievement of the necessary political stability for economic integration and socio-economic development. Needless to say, the establishment of such a conducive environment requires first and foremost

democratization, good governance, peace and justice, as well as the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. While achievements by African countries in these areas have been encouraging in the past few years, the contribution of the United Nations system in cooperation with the OAU to the efforts of African countries is also indispensable.

In the areas of economic cooperation and development, the challenges are those highlighted in the Cairo Agenda For Action. However, activities that could be undertaken through United Nations-OAU cooperation are expected to implement various sectoral programmes conducted within the framework of regional integration to address Africa's external debt problem, food security and the restructuring and transformation of the African economy parallel to current trends in the global economy.

In the areas of social development and the environment, the United Nations-OAU cooperation should emphasize capacity-building, as well as the implementation of the various declarations and strategies adopted by the OAU Heads of State and Government.

The Organization of African Unity and the United Nations system constitute indispensable instruments for the maintenance of peace and security, and the promotion of the economic, social and cultural development of the African continent. The judicious use of these instruments through cooperation and the concerted rationalization of activities could contribute considerably to the implementation of development strategies and plans adopted by the higher organs of the OAU for the benefit of the continent and the attainment of the objectives set out in the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the representative of Zimbabwe for introducing, on behalf of the member States of the OAU, draft resolution A/52/L.8, on cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. It is our hope that the Assembly will adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

Mr. Rubadiri (Malawi): My delegation associates itself fully with the remarks made on behalf of the Group of African States by the delegation of Zimbabwe on this agenda item, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity".

Malawi welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, contained in document A/52/374, which gives an outline of

the activities that have taken place, as well as those that are scheduled, aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two Organizations.

My delegation is pleased to note that since the adoption of resolution 51/151 by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session efforts towards increasing cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) have continued. I would therefore like to pay tribute to the Secretaries-General of the two organizations for their commitment to advancing collaboration in the various areas.

We welcome increased consultations and exchange of information as one way of enhancing the mutual capacities of the two Organizations to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa and to coordinate efforts in that regard. The appointment of Mr. Mohammed Sahnoun as joint United Nations-OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region, a mandate which was later expanded to encompass the Congo, cannot go unnoticed.

The African continent continues to pursue the issues of governance, peace and security with determined vigour and commitment. We are therefore encouraged by the continued participation of the United Nations in Africa's efforts towards democratization and peace-building. My delegation has taken particular note of the proposed establishment by the United Nations Department of Political Affairs of a liaison office at OAU Headquarters in a continuing effort to strengthen further cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU.

My delegation would further like to recognize the ongoing cooperative efforts by the United Nations, through its various agencies, in the areas of economic and social development. We welcome this and urge the various actors to spare no effort in lending support to the continent as it strives towards economic betterment. The effective implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa will be a step in the right direction.

In conclusion, I should like to second the delegation of Zimbabwe, which so ably introduced the draft resolution before us. I should also like to thank the non-African delegations that have spoken today in favour of the draft resolution and, indeed, those who have kept silent in order to save time as well. My delegation fully welcomes draft resolution A/52/L.8, whose thrust is the

strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Aass (Norway): The Norwegian Government welcomes the Secretary General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and supports the draft resolution before us.

We believe that there is a need to strengthen further the cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and its various agencies and the Organization of African Unity in the fields outlined in the Secretary General's report. The United Nations has a special responsibility to assist the countries on the African continent, and we therefore also appreciate the initiative taken by the Security Council last September to organize a ministerial meeting on the situation in Africa.

We all know that development and peace are closely interconnected, in Africa as everywhere else, and it is a tragic fact that many parts of Africa in recent years have been the scenes of a number of serious conflicts, with grave consequences in terms of both material destruction and human lives.

Because of the internal nature of many of these conflicts, the United Nations and the international community have often not been able effectively to intervene in order to prevent such conflicts from escalating and developing into major and destructive civil wars, as we have seen recently in the case, for example, of the Republic of the Congo.

The international community cannot and should not avoid its responsibility in such situations, or limit itself to assisting with relief to repair the damages and scars caused by conflicts and wars. We therefore would like to underline the importance of enhancing the capacity of the OAU and other African organizations and institutions to play a more active role in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts on the African continent. Only peace arrangements that have the support and ownership of the countries and parties concerned will prove to be viable and stable.

The international community, through the United Nations, should at the same time do its utmost to support and assist the regional efforts in this field, and that is why it is essential to strengthen the cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the OAU.

We believe that the appointment of a joint United Nations-OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region is a commendable new initiative in this respect, but in order to make such joint efforts successful, the necessary financial and administrative resources must be made available.

We also believe in the need to strengthen and develop further the cooperation and coordination between the OAU and subregional organizations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), especially with regard to conflict prevention and regional development schemes. Efforts should be made to ensure that there is full coordination between the United Nations and its agencies and these subregional organizations, and the OAU should play a key role in this respect.

The Norwegian Government believes that experience has shown that respect for human rights, democratic institutions and good governance are important and essential contributions to conflict prevention, to political stability and to social and economic development. We greatly appreciate that this view is today shared by the majority of African States and by the African organizations and institutions. Norway will therefore continue to give the highest priority in its development cooperation to assist African countries in this field, both bilaterally and through the United Nations and its agencies, with the aim of promoting and strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU and other regional African organizations.

Mr. Amehou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): Since cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was institutionalized in 1965, it has steadily evolved. At first it centred on specific fields of activity. Then it became more general, spreading through the two organizations, the specialized agencies and other relevant bodies, before focusing on the prevention and peaceful settlement of conflicts, the maintenance of international peace and security, and the management of hot spots in Africa.

This evolution reflects the dynamism of relations between the two organizations, but more particularly their ability to adapt their joint activities to developments in the continent.

This cooperation, which Bénin welcomes, has achieved encouraging results in the area of conflict resolution. These include the return of peace to Liberia in West Africa and the progressive normalization of the situation in the Central African Republic and in the Great Lakes region.

These results have been achieved thanks to the efforts and goodwill of the parties to the disputes and thanks to the many initiatives that the OAU has undertaken with the support of the United Nations.

As recent developments on the world scene have shown, achieving the goal of preventing conflicts requires adopting an integrated approach, which must encompass all questions relating to development and the full flowering of humankind. These questions — I cite just a few — include the restoration of economies ruined by these conflicts, and hence rehabilitation, reconstruction and development; and the establishment of systems for the rapid prevention of State-level conflicts.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the initiatives undertaken by some countries, including the United States of America, Great Britain and France, in the area of strengthening African peacekeeping capacities.

The experience of recent years has confirmed that peace — that is, the absence of conflicts — cannot in and of itself guarantee a climate of economic and social prosperity.

In addition, the measures I have cited must be accompanied by the successful resolution of other problems: debt and debt servicing; economic and social growth; the elimination of poverty; the promotion of sustainable development; and so on.

These are the different elements that, among others, were the subject of the most recent summit meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity, which took place in June of this year in Harare, Zimbabwe. At the Security Council's special ministerial meeting on the situation in Africa and also during the general debate at this General Assembly session, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, in his capacity as President of the Organization of African Unity, brilliantly presented all these different aspects of the question of the development of Africa.

This is the only way that Africa's development, which has been the object of so many initiatives, can finally be achieved.

My delegation remains confident that, despite all the apparent obstacles, our collective determination will prevail.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*):

The General Assembly's consideration of the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) provides Member States with the opportunity to assess the present state of that cooperation and to go more closely into ways of developing it. Such a review is all the more important because it is taking place at a moment when we are witnessing growing interest in the situation in Africa on the part of the international community. The holding last 25 September of the Security Council's special ministerial meeting on the situation in Africa was certainly a sign of that interest.

That meeting underlined the importance of the role of the international community in helping Africa meet the challenges it faces. To this end, cooperation between the two organizations is essential. In the presidential statement adopted during the meeting [S/PRST/1997/46], the Council called for a stronger partnership between the United Nations and the OAU in the area of conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace. My delegation welcomes this greater awareness by members of the Security Council, which reflects the need for greater cooperation between the two organizations in this area. Strengthening the partnership necessarily calls for the establishment of effective mechanisms through which the two organizations can consult and exchange information on a continual and regular basis, and benefit from their respective experience.

In his report to the General Assembly presented in document A/52/374, the Secretary-General took note of the various mechanisms that have been established for strengthening relations between the two organizations and coordinating their work in areas related to security. In that context, my delegation supports the proposal to establish a liaison office within the OAU to facilitate coordination and the exchange of information between the two organizations.

On another level, it is important to emphasize the need to strengthen the OAU's capacity in the area of conflict prevention and peacekeeping by increasing

assistance to the pan-African organization's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. In that regard we welcome the fact that the Secretary-General recently sent a technical mission to Addis Ababa to study how the United Nations could best help the OAU secretariat to establish an operations centre so as to strengthen the capacity of its unit dealing with questions related to peace on the continent.

In that context, it is appropriate to note the growing role of subregional organizations in the area of peacekeeping and conflict prevention in Africa, as well as the development of bilateral cooperation as a way of enhancing the capacities of African States in this area. These trends are salutary for two reasons. On the one hand they reflect Africans' desire to organize themselves better to protect against conflicts and to preserve peace on their continent. On the other hand, they affirm the growing awareness at the international level of the need to support the activities of the African States in this connection. My delegation supports all efforts and initiatives that can make the work being done to preserve peace on the African continent more effective. We believe that coordination between the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations in this area, together with continuous consultations among African States, are essential to ensure the success of this work. My delegation welcomes the attention given by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, to the situation in Africa. It is apparent in his constant efforts to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations, particularly in the area of conflict prevention, which is a key priority in the OAU's work.

It has become widely recognized that security and development go hand in hand and are interdependent in the sense that there can be no sustainable security without sustainable development and vice versa. It is acknowledged that the causes of conflicts that break out everywhere in other parts of the world are often rooted in economic and social problems. In other words, the best way to prevent conflicts that is to promote development.

Despite some resumption of economic growth in a number of African countries, it remains true that Africa as a whole continues to face multiple constraints that prevent many countries of the continent from being able to achieve sustained economic growth. The major challenge to African countries today, in a world characterized by globalization, is how to become integrated into the world economy and become a viable partner in it.

Such a perspective will remain a pious wish unless the international community provides the assistance that the African States need in order to overcome the difficulties they face in their attempts to develop. For several years, the African States have been carrying out economic and political reforms that reflect their eagerness to open themselves to the world economy and to adhere to the global principles of democracy and human rights. These efforts must have the consistent support of the international community if they are to enjoy continued success.

In this respect, particular attention should be paid to the debt burden that continues to weigh heavily on the African economies. Efforts must also be made to reverse the current trend towards decreased official development assistance. In this context, cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity is an essential means of supporting the African States' development efforts and of mobilizing Africa's partners to that end.

In his July report on renewing the United Nations, the Secretary-General proposed the creation of an office of development financing to mobilize new and additional financial resources for development projects. We believe that this proposal should be studied thoroughly and we would emphasize the crucial contribution that donor countries can make in mobilizing additional financial resources.

Moreover, multilateral cooperation and economic integration among African States, to which Tunisia attaches particular importance, are imperative to the promotion of development in the continent. The United Nations role in cooperating with the OAU is essential to that effect. Action in this respect should include the drafting of specific programmes aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in Africa and at facilitating the attainment of the objectives of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community.

It is clear that any solution to the problems of African development, both within and outside the framework of the OAU, must include the establishment of a new partnership between Africa and the international community. This would require the increased commitment of the international community to helping the continent and global measures to respond effectively and adequately to its needs.

In this regard, Tunisia reiterates the appeal made by our President, Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, for a global economic plan to ensure Africa's expansion on a healthy and lasting basis. This plan should help to strengthen Africa's own capacities by mobilizing financial resources, intensifying technical assistance and strengthening industrialization through partnership, direct investment, trade and the search for a lasting solution to the problem of debt.

In conclusion, I would recall that the Security Council, in its presidential statement of last September on the situation in Africa, stressed that the challenges facing Africa require a more global response. To that end, it requested the Secretary-General to submit a report containing concrete recommendations to the Council by February 1998 regarding the sources of conflict in Africa, ways to prevent and address these conflicts, and how to lay the foundation for durable peace and economic growth. We express the hope that, when the report is submitted, it will contain recommendations that will serve as the starting point of a new era of effective cooperation and fruitful partnership between the international community and Africa.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.8. I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution this morning, the Netherlands has become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.8. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/52/L.8 was adopted (resolution 52/20).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 42?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that, in view of the lateness of the hour, the consideration of the last item scheduled for this morning — agenda item 20 on humanitarian assistance and its sub-

items (a), (b), (d), (e) and (f) — is postponed to this afternoon.

The President in the Chair.

Programme of work

The President: First, I should like to inform Members that I have received a letter from the Secretary-General, in which he requests the convening of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations. In this regard, I have already held extensive consultations and have also requested the Chairmen of the regional groups to inform their respective members about my intention to convene a meeting of the Working Group on Tuesday, 25 November 1997, at 3 p.m. in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

On the subject of agenda item 59, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", I should like to inform the Assembly that, as scheduled, we will have a debate on this item on 4 December.

After having held intensive consultations, it is my understanding that we will not be taking any decisions on the item regarding Security Council issues at this stage of its consideration. I have received assurances to this effect, and I am satisfied with these assurances.

In this connection, I should like to take this opportunity to inform the Assembly that it is also my intention to convene a meeting this week of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council to elect its Vice-Chairmen. An announcement to this effect will be made in the *Journal*.

I would like also to draw the Assembly's attention to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 40/243, which states,

"no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly may meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly".

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees with my proposals — that is, to convene a meeting of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial

Situation of the United Nations tomorrow, and to convene a meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council this week, at a time to be announced in the *Journal*?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to announce that the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations will hold its first meeting

tomorrow at 3 p.m. in the Trusteeship Council Chamber. The agenda for that meeting will be as follows: the election of Vice-Chairmen, a statement by the Secretary-General and a statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management.

As far as the meeting on Security Council reform is concerned, this will include only the election or nomination of two Vice-Chairmen.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.